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THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF SEX: SOME BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL FACULTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON BACHELOR OF DIVINITY DEGREES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

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September 1966

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We, the undersigned, hereby certify that we have read and recommended to the General Faculty Council for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF SEX: SOME BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, submitted by Blake Llewellyn Anderson, B.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.

THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF SEX: SOME BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES

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THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF SEX: SOME BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

Man is a sexed being. This is one of his most obvious and fundamental characteristics. It is also one of the deepest perplexities of his existence. The mystery and perplexity of sexuality have fascinated man from the days of the ancient fertility cults in which imitative magic was practised through sexual intercourse, to Sigmund Freud's appreciation of the power and pervasiveness of the sex drive. Modern and ancient art and literature, as well as contemporary psychology have plumbed the depths of this mystery, explored it, and utilized it. The fact of sex, then, is a central and unavoidable one in human life and thought and art.

Because the Bible is concerned about human life in its entirety, it quite naturally has a great deal to say about so central a fact of life as sex. This often comes as a surprise to moderns - even to modern Christians. It is popularly supposed that the Bible, if it says anything at all in this regard, says very little, and says it negatively. This widespread misconception is both surprising and alarming. It is surprising because it is difficult to read the Bible at all and overlook its candid recognition of sex and its many manifestations; and it is alarming because many sub-Biblical understandings of sex are abroad and are widely held even by

Christians. Widespread ignorance as to the existence of a Biblical understanding of sex then, seems to persist.

This situation is bad enough in itself. But it is further complicated by widely held misunderstandings as to what the Bible does say about sex if and when it says anything at all. Two assumptions seem particularly current: the Bible posits but one justification for the act of coitus, and that is the procreation of the species; and it regards the use of sex even for this purpose as a regrettable but necessary evil.. This, of course, is but a caricature of the opinions of others. Perhaps few thinking people would admit to such views if closely questioned. Yet the experience of many pastors and teachers seems to indicate that these ideas linger in many minds. Norman W. Pittenger, for example, remarks with regard to sex "that...it is true that great numbers of men and women who 'profess and call themselves Christian' have the most mistaken ideas as to the basic Christian view."¹ Mistaken ideas as to the Biblical view of sex, then, are unfortunately common, and two of these are the assumptions that the Bible thinks sex is for procreation only, and that it is basically evil.

It has been presupposed thus far that these two popular assumptions are, in fact, really erroneous. This is a presupposition which will be questioned in this thesis. In fact, the purpose of this thesis is to question these popular assumptions and to attempt to contribute to an alternative understanding

of the Biblical view of sex if these assumptions are in fact mistaken. Two questions, therefore, will underlie our subsequent investigations: "What, in Biblical thought, is the purpose of sex?"; and "Does the Bible think sex good or bad?" In other words, what is the Biblical understanding of the purpose and value of sex?

One thesis cannot, of course, give a definitive answer to these questions. Yet, certain fruitful areas of Biblical thought can be explored and certain clues offered. As various commentaries, writings, and the Biblical literature itself are perused, certain leading themes seem to emerge; themes which also seem to provide some significant leads to an answer to these two questions. These themes constitute the subjects of the first three chapters of this thesis, and are, respectively, the duality of man; the unique Biblical language for sex and sexual anatomy; and the place of sex in the drama of man's sin and God's redemptive purpose. In the first three chapters, therefore, these themes are explored with a view of seeking some clues as to the Biblical understanding of the purpose and value of sex. These clues thus derived are then drawn together in the final chapter, and some tentative conclusions are suggested.

One difficulty immediately encountered when dealing with sex in the Bible, is that neither the Old or New Testaments anywhere use the word. Indeed, there is no Greek or

Hebrew term for sex at all. Similarly, the Bible nowhere specifically deals with the subject. The Biblical understanding of sex must therefore be inferred from canonical literature that reveals it only incidentally. That is, any conclusions must be culled from laws, stories, incidents, and teachings that are really concerned with something else, such as marriage, or prostitution or the origin of man. In fact, the Bible is interested in man as a whole, and thus it uniformly declines to abstract his sexuality from the totality of his existence and deal with it in isolation. But on the other hand, precisely because the Bible is interested in man as a whole, it touches indirectly upon sex, for sex is most obviously a rather prominent part of that whole. Therefore, throughout the canon, Biblical thought as to the purpose and value of sex is implicit. This thesis will attempt to render it more explicit.

Obviously, not all the canonical literature relating to the leading themes can be examined in detail. Therefore certain passages have been selected which seem to be particularly significant for the exploration of these themes. Other Biblical literature is frequently referred to for further corroboration and illumination. This method runs the risk of "proof-texting." An attempt has been made to avoid this error by selecting, wherever possible, passages that are significant not only to this subject, but to

Biblical thought as a whole, and making them the chief bases of any conclusions drawn. In this way no conclusions of any importance have been based only upon insignificant passages that do not represent the general flavour of Biblical thinking, and similarly, it has been rendered more difficult to consider only those texts which reinforce my own or other contemporary presuppositions, assumptions, and prejudices. In short, so far as possible, conclusions have been drawn from Biblical literature that relates as significantly to such great Biblical ideas as creation, man, sin, judgment and redemption as to the Biblical view of the purpose and value' of sex. A major exception to this rule occurs in the second chapter, in which the Biblical terms for sexual intercourse and the anatomy of sex are considered. In this chapter word studies are involved, and in all such word studies conclusions must be drawn not from one or two texts only, major though those texts may be. But rather all appearances of the words involved must be considered, and conclusions drawn from an aggregate of these texts. But as a general rule, this study revolves around texts of major importance.

For the purpose of this thesis, the term "sex" will refer not only to the act of coitus, but also to the sex instinct, and to the sexual construction of man. That is, the term will apply to the totality of man's sexual differentiation. Further, it is the sexuality of man and of man

alone with which we will be concerned.

All quotations from the Bible are from the Revised Standard Version (RSV) unless otherwise specified.

Footnotes

1. Norman W. Pittenger, The Christian View of Sexual Behavior, (Greenwich, 1954), p. 18
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Chapter One: The Origin of Man's Duality

A helpful starting point for our study, is an examination of the Biblical accounts of the origin of sexual differentiation. The sheer fact that humanity is divided in half - male and female - is itself of interest to certain Biblical writers, and they set out, therefore, to account for this phenomenon. The accounts which they give us inevitably reveal a good deal of their underlying pre-suppositions concerning both the purpose and value of sex, and these same accounts also influence other Biblical thinkers, writers, and teachers in their understanding of them. Man is sexually divided: how did this come about? The Biblical answers to this question are basic to its entire understanding of sex in general, and to its understanding of the purpose and value of sex in particular.

Two sections of canonical literature are especially concerned with this question. These sections have other interests too, of course. But the question of the origin of man's sexuality is still a prime one for them. The two basic passages involved are Genesis 1:26-31, and Genesis 2:7-25. Let us examine each in turn, and note those of their peculiar emphases which are of significance to this study.

Although Genesis 1:26-31 occurs first in the Bible as we now have it, this is not a chronologically correct arrangement. For according to C. A. Simpson in his exegesis of this passage

in The Interpreter's Bible¹, this section is the work of the Priestly (hereafter referred to as "P") writer or writers, while Genesis 2:7-25 is that of the Yahwist (hereafter referred to as "J"). Inasmuch as J antedates P by at least three hundred and fifty years, these two passages are in inverse order chronologically. As we shall see presently, however, there is reason to suppose that the final redactors of Genesis arranged them in this fashion for a good reason. Assuming this to be so, we shall treat them in the same order as that in which they appear in our Bible. First, therefore, we shall examine P's account of the origin of man's sexual differentiation as we have it in Genesis 1:26-31.

This passage is the first, although not earliest, story of the creation of man in the Bible. God consults his heavenly host, and says "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."², and then outlines the place of man at the top of the created order. In vs. 27 we are told "So God Created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them", and after blessing man and giving him the gifts of creation, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."³

Three important emphases emerge from this account. In the first place it is emphatically stated that sexuality is a part of the divine order. It was created in the beginning as a central, integral, and important feature of creation. It is a God-appointed

condition. It is a very part of his plan. Ours is a sexually oriented nature, and was so from the beginning in accordance with God's own purpose.

Although this idea may be commonplace to moderns, it was unique in the ancient world, and had far-reaching implications. Some of these implications, at least as they affect Biblical thought, will emerge as our study progresses. Its uniqueness can be seen as it is compared with a Greek account of sexual differentiation which is offered in Plato's Symposium. In this work, Plato represents Aristophanes as saying that man was originally created androgynous. That is to say, in man's original state, he was two sexes in one. The same idea is also reflected in the myth of Hermaphroditus, "the divinely fused body of a beautiful boy and adoring nymph, possessed of the organs of both sexes, able to love and be loved at will."⁴ But, according to Aristophanes, this androgynous man was split in two by a god in a fit of temper, and has been thus divided ever since. The sex drive is therefore the urge to become the primeval androgynous human creature once again.

It is obvious that in this view sexual differentiation is regarded almost as a punishment, and certainly as a lower and regrettable condition. Man in his highest and best form is asexual - because he is both sexes combined and therefore without

sexual drive. Sexual differentiation is not an integral part of the plan of creation - it is almost a perversion of the created order.

Of course not all Greek thinkers and teachers explicitly held this view. But the very fact that it appears in so serious a work as Plato's Symposium indicates the acceptability of this notion of the Greek mind, and serves to point up the uniqueness of the Hebrew concept. For to the Hebrew, sexual differentiation is inevitable, natural, and good⁵, for God created it from the beginning. Humanity was not first created as a whole and later divided into the sexes. But right from its inception it was both male and female. Otto A. Piper in his book The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage puts it this way. "The Biblical record of the creation indicates that the sexual differentiation of mankind --- forms the foundation of human history. Hence there can be no human activity that is completely independent of the man - woman relationship."⁶ "For this reason, sexual differentiation is not simply a natural datum of life. Rather it is divinely destined----."⁷ Sexual differentiation is of God.

A second important idea which emerges from our passage is that sexual differentiation is related to man's creation in the image of God. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."⁸ The interplay of the words "him" and "them", plus the proximity

of the creation of the sexes to the statement that man is created in the image of God, together seem to indicate that man's sexual nature somehow reflects the nature of God himself. There is a connexion between man's sexuality and the image of God.

What, exactly, P means by "the image of God", is, of course, a large question. Since it is nowhere precisely explained, we cannot determine exactly what it means with regard to sexual differentiation. But whatever it means explicitly, it certainly implies this: sexual differentiation is a basic and unchangeable element in the nature, structure, and personality of man. That is, the sexual division of man is an essential part of his very humanity in a way that racial differentiation, for example, is not. "Whereas all racial differences are 'variations of one and the same structure' and thus are miscible and therefore inconstant, the sexes have an indelible character", ⁹says Helmut Thielicke. P is saying, in effect, that man is unique because he is made in God's image. And, among other things, to be in God's image is to be a sexual creature. Man's sexuality, therefore, is an integral feature of his unique humanity.

It is possible that bearing the image of God also implies that men are able to relate to persons in an "I-thou" relationship as God is able so to do. If this is so, P might

also be implying that man's sexuality is his power to relate to others of his species in a special I-thou relationship. This aspect of the purpose of sex differentiation must be examined later.

Because bearing the image of God is connected with his sexual division then, man's sexual differentiation is basic to his unique human structure.

And finally, we arrive at a third emphasis in P's account of the origin of sexual differentiation. And that is that God is not himself a sexual being. Man is not pro-created out of God's sexual activity; God has no consort, no divine family; and there is no indication whatever that he is even possessed of a sexual structure or character. He is not even hermaphroditic, combining the organs and qualities of both sexes. W. G. Cole points out that "Yahweh enhanced both masculinity and femininity within himself, transcending them both as he embraced and transcended the divine and the demonic."¹⁰

God seems simply to be independent of sex per se.

In our above discussion of the image of God as this concept relates to sex, we noted that P is not clear as to what he means by this term. C. A. Simpson, while believing that it has predominantly spiritual connotations, also adds that "---there can be little doubt, bodily form was to some extent at any rate involved."¹¹ The Old Testament undoubtedly

tends to a certain anthropomorphism in its concept of God, and one would think, therefore, that it would also tend to picture him in sexual terms. Hence, if P has a certain physical resemblance in mind when he speaks of man bearing the image of God, one would strongly suspect that he is visualizing a God who is sexual even as men are sexual.

Such, however, does not appear to be the case. Although God is referred to in the masculine gender, nowhere in the Bible does he engage directly in sexual activities. It is true, as we shall see later, that certain of his relationships carry sexual connotations, such as his relationship to Israel and to Jesus. Nevertheless, these relationships are not of a specifically and physically sexual nature, but seem rather to be described in quasi-sexual terms only because such terms are useful metaphors and images. But even these metaphors and images are used extremely rarely, and, one sense, extremely guardedly. The overwhelming majority of God's actions are described in a sexual language.

W. G. Cole suggests that such a careful "desexing" of God might well represent a reaction against the multitudinous fertility and nature cults of Egypt and Babylon, and especially of Assyria and Canaan.¹² Although P is an exilic or post-exilic writer, and therefore did not have to

contend directly with the influence of Canaanite fertility cults and Baals, nevertheless, the gods of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia were generously endowed with human-like sexual differentiations, and their worship often involved imitative magic in which their worshippers copulated as the gods copulated. But just as God is not a nature god, but Lord of all nature; and just as his worship does not require adaptation to the cycles of nature; even so he is not a sexed God, but a Lord of sexuality, and his worship does not require the imitative magic of cult prostitution. God is a lord of history, and therefore does not merely reflect the elements and structure of nature or its sexual polarity. Unlike Isis and Osiris of Egypt; Marduk and Ishtar of Babylon; Astarte of Assyria; and the Baals of Canaan, God does not engage in sexual activity, and is not sexually structured himself. But as Lord of nature and history, he has created sexuality as a part of his almighty purpose.

While it reflects something of the image of God, therefore, man's sexuality does not directly correspond with the structure of the divine. To the contrary, because God created it, it is a part of man's very creatureliness and mortality.

The Priestly account of the origin of sex differentiation, therefore, makes three points of interest to our study. First, sexual polarity is a part of God's plan from

the very first. It is not a fallen or unnatural state. It is a created state. Second, sexuality is tied in with the image of God which man bears. It is thus a part both of man's glory and of his uniqueness, and is fundamental to his personality and humanity. Third, although sexual differentiation is related to God's image in man, it does not physically correspond to God's structure. It is related to God's nature, but it is also very much a part of man's finiteness.

We turn now to the J account of the origin of sexual differentiation. This account is contained in Genesis 2:7-25, especially in verses 18-23. In the interests of accuracy, we must note before proceeding further that only the basic structure of this account is J, and certain redactional additions have been made. According to C. A. Simpson, these interpolated verses are 5,9,10-14, 15, 19, and 20.¹³ Since none of these interpolations makes a decisive difference to our study, however, we will simply treat this section as a unity and concentrate on verses 18-23, which constitute J's account of the origin of sexual polarity.

This is the second story of the creation of man in the Bible. The Lord God (Yahweh-Elohim) forms a man from the dust of the ground, and breathes life into him. After planting a garden, the Lord God places the man in it. From verses

10-14 there is a slight digression describing the river flowing out of Eden with its four branches. Verse 15 resumes the narrative with God's dual command to the man to tend and keep the garden, and not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After deciding that man should have a helpmate, the Lord God forms all the animals, and presents them to the man, who names them. But none of them are fit for him. The Lord God therefore anaesthetizes the man, removes one of his ribs, and from it forms a woman, whom the man finds fit to be a companion.

At least two emphases of interest to our study emerge from this account. In the first place, the difference between the sexes is emphasized. In the first account of man's origin, the man is created as a sexual being right at the beginning. But in this account, a man is formed first, and then a woman, thus highlighting man's sexual division. Man and woman are almost separate creations; and only the fact that the woman is formed from the man's rib obviates this implication that she is a separate act of creation altogether. Humanity is not formed simultaneously with immediate sexual differentiation; but rather a specific man is created, and then a specific woman. J's account points up and emphasizes man's sexual differentiation.

We noted previously that this section is in inverse order chronologically with Genesis 1:26-31, and that this arrangement may have been made for a good reason. Otto Piper suggests that this reason may have been a desire to emphasize the sexual division more strongly. "The second account of the creation of man in Genesis 2:7 is in its present context meant to serve as a commentary on the first one by stressing the difference between the sexes."¹⁴ Whereas the first account acknowledge differentiation, the second one emphasizes it. Men and women are not basically exactly similar, differing only in their superficial sex organs. But rather there is a fundamental difference in function, structure and personality, of which the different sex organs are only peripheral manifestations. Men and women share a common humanity. But their function and structure within that human framework are decisively and radically different.

This conviction that the sexes are fundamentally different reflects in a variety of ways in the Bible. This accounts in part, for example for the strong Biblical reaction against homosexuality, transvestianism, and eunuchs. Contrary to a popular misconception, this reaction springs not from bigoted prudishness, but rather from the deep-seated belief that men and women are different and must remain so. Any

deviation or compromise is a perversion of God's plan.

It is true that in the case of homosexuality there is also a strong connexion in the Biblical mind between it and idolatry. Male cult prostitution was a creeping cancer in the religious life of Israel that periodically had to be cut out (1 Kings 14:22-24). This insidious practice was attacked by various kings as part of their reformation programmes (1 Kings 15:12-14; 1 Kings 22:46; 2 Kings 23:ff). The Law also reflects this aversion to cult prostitution, and this can be seen, for instance, in Deuteronomy 23:17-18 which states that "----there shall be no cult prostitute of the sons of Israel." Homosexuality, then, is also inveighed against because of its connexion with syncretistic idolatry.

On the other hand, however, such passages as Genesis 19:1-11, which illustrates the unbridled lusts of Sodom with the story of the Sodomite homosexuals' desire for the two angels of the Lord; and Judges 19:22-26, which tells with great repugance of the men of Gibeah lusting for the Levite; reveal the Hebrew distaste for homosexuality practised for any reason whatever. Again, this is reflected in the Law, Leviticus 18:22, which states "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination"; and Leviticus 20:13, which enjoins death for both partners caught in a

homosexual relationship.

Predictably, the New Testament reflects the same attitude. There is no clear evidence that Christ himself made any comment regarding homosexuality or had any dealings with homosexuals. But Paul, on the other hand, perhaps because of his greater contact with the Hellenistic world in which homosexuality was not only rampant but also accepted, had a fair amount to say concerning it.

Paul's views on the subject are no doubt in part an Herbraic reaction against the sexual practises of Hellenism. For according to W. G. Cole, in Greek thought sex differentiation was minimized. An abstract ideal of beauty, which looked for such elements as grace, form and symmetry, was applied to both sexes equally. If a boy embodied these criteria of beauty, therefore, he was considered at least as sexually attractive to a man as was a woman. Indeed, boys were often regarded as more desirable than women. A Greek proverb "women for breeding, but boys for pleasure"¹⁵ discloses how far the Greek mind was prepared to obviate sexual differences.

"(Sex) was subordinated to the higher values of aesthetics which had laws of its own. Proportion, balance, rhythm, harmony - these things applied equally to both sexes---without regard to sexual differentiation. That a beautiful boy should be

attractive only to women was a thought utterly foreign to the Greek mind-----. Beauty was beauty, and one always desired to draw near and if possible to possess it."¹⁶

Accordingly, Greek art and sculpture blurred the differences between the sexes, portraying both men and women in a strikingly similar way. Lines, curves and figures are almost identical. Only the clothing or the sex organs themselves reveal whether a subject is male or female. In the Greek world, then, homosexuality and a minimizing of the sex differentiation were widely accepted.

Paul, however, as a good Hebrew, was repelled by this. He was even more repelled by the practice of homosexuality within the Church. He therefore lashed out at it in very definite terms. For example, Romans 1:26-28 describes how the Gentiles were given up "to dishonourable passions." For "--- the men --- gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men ..."¹⁷ Paul may even be indicating Lesbianism when, in verse 26b he writes "Their (the Gentiles') women exchanged natural relations for unnatural..." Similarly in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 he makes it quite clear that neither the immoral "...nor homosexuals...will inherit the kingdom of God." There is no room in the Church for homosexuality, because God created men and women with distinct differences.

Almost uniformly, then, the Biblical literature betrays a strong repugnance for homosexuality. And this repugnance is based, at least to a large extent, on the conviction that men and women are different, and the distinction must be preserved. Homosexuality is therefore abhorrent because it tends to overlook the importance of sexual differentiation.

Similarly, and for the same reason, eunuchs are regarded with suspicion in the Old Testament, particularly in the Law. In Deuteronomy, for example, it is commanded that "he whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the assembly of the Lord."¹⁸ This is in sharp contrast to surrounding nations, in many of which eunuchs were often highly placed officials in courts and temples. Even before the Deuteronomic injunction against eunuchs, they had been used to a certain extent in Israel in imitation of her neighbours. Eunuchs, for instance, hurled Queen Jezebel to her fate in 2 Kings 9:32f. But even in Deuteronomic law, which in some respects is slightly more lenient than older laws, eunuchs were not to be admitted to the covenant community, for they were a perversion of God's created order, being neither fully male, nor fully female.

Later, however, this law was criticised by Trito-Isaiah (56:4-5), who preached that all faithful Jews, including eunuchs could have a place in the restored community.

And in the New Testament, Jesus speaks of celibacy as a calling to be in effect a eunuch (Matt.19:10), while the story of Philip and the Ethiopain eunuch in Acts 8:27-28 portrays the Ethiopian in a favourable light. But one still senses that this later acceptance was qualified by an "in spite of" attitude: eunuchs were accepted in spite of their emasculation. By being neither male nor female, they fitted into God's plan of sexual differentiation only because of his grace.

Likewise, the command in Deuteronomy 22:5 against transvestianism seems to stem from the Hebrew desire to keep the sexes distinct. "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." W. G. Cole comments: "This is not simply a passing perjorative comment on the aberration the psychologists call transvestianism... Rather, this points to something deeply imbedded in the Hebrew consciousness: the conviction that a man was man and a woman, a woman; and that all confusion between them was to be avoided."¹⁹ The prohibition against transvestianism, then, also reveals the Hebrew consciousness of sexual differentiation.

We have seen that the New Testament supports the Old in the matter of homosexuality, while siding with Trito-Isaiah

against Deuteronomy in the matter of eunuchs. This might appear to indicate that the New Testament is ambivalent in its attitude to the importance of sexual distinction. This, however, is not so. It would seem, rather, that the New Testament simply assumes what the Old makes so clear: the sexes are different, and must remain so. It has been postulated, on the basis of passages such as Matthew 15:21 (the Syro-phoenician woman), Luke 8:1-3 (a list of some women following Jesus), and Galatians 3:28 ("there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"), that the New Testament softens the Old Testament's sharp line of demarcation between the two sexes. As we will see in a later chapter, however, these passages more likely are dealing with the inclusiveness of God's grace, and are not at all concerned with either obviating or upholding sexual polarity per se. The equality of all humanity before God in his kingdom is the burden of their message. Further, against them we may posit such passages as Matthew 19:4, in which Jesus refers to Genesis 1:27, P's account of man's creation as male and female; and 1 Corinthians 11:3-12, in which Paul makes a clear distinction between the functions and duties of men and women in the Church, referring for support to Genesis 2:7-25, our passage now under advisement. Such texts rely on our two passages from Genesis, both of which assume sexual differentiation, and one of which specifically emphasizes it. In the light of all this, therefore,

it is safe to state that Biblical literature as a whole supports explicitly, or implicitly, J's postulate that the sexual division is sharp, permanent, and divinely ordained.

The difference between the sexes, then, is one emphasis made by J in his account of the origin of sexual differentiation. A second emphasis is this: man and woman are mutually dependent. They must rely upon one another in order to achieve their full humanity.

P concludes his story of creation by stating that just before he rested on the seventh day, God surveyed all that he had created and found it not only good, but "very good."²⁰ The editors of Genesis arrange their material in such a way that J appears to take this pronouncement that everything was good and to qualify it by having God say " 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' "²¹ After seeing that all else was good, God also sees that it is not good for the man to be alone. After discovering that animals do not rectify man's aloneness, God creates a woman from his rib, and leads her to the man as a father leads a bride. The man reacts instantly with joyous ecstasy by crying out " 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman (ishshah) because she was taken out of man (ish).'"²²

Neither of the two sexes is a complete being by itself. For humanity in all its fullness and completeness equals ish plus ishshah.

It is interesting that God's solution to the man's solitude is to provide "a helper fit for him."²³ Why is the word "helper" selected rather than "companion", which would seem to be a more obvious antidote for isolation? Gerhard Von Rad answers by pointing out a significant Biblical insight. "Solitude is--defined here very realistically as helplessness."²⁴ The man by himself is utterly helpless to fulfil the potentials of his creation. In his aloneness he is helpless. The animals cannot meet his need because they help him in only a superficial way. It is in his basic fragmentation and incompleteness as a human being that he needs help, and animals will never suffice for that job. But a woman, created from his own bone and flesh is both an equal and an opposite, and is both these things as a human being. As bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh she alone is "a helper fit for him." She is his helper because she only can come to him in his solitude and thus redeem him from helplessness.

Man, then, according to J, finds his true destiny only as he relates to his other half: the opposite sex. Indeed, there is a sense in which he is not fully human when

he is alone. He is fragmented and incomplete. Helmut Thielicke puts it thus:

"The creation of the woman from Adam's rib parabolically suggests--the fact that man and woman belong together. At the same time, the very ground and goal of this act of creation points to the fact that man's being has been determined by God as a 'being in fellow-humanity'---the representative expression of which is that man and woman belong together."²⁵

In J, then, the man is created and placed in the garden of Eden not only to live in obedience and fellowship to God, but also to live in a relationship with the woman. Both the woman and the man are dependent for their full humanity upon one another. And it is this double relationship - to God and to one another - that constitutes their full unique humanity.

In our examination of the two Biblical accounts of the origin of man's duality, then, we have noted the following emphases: first, sexual differentiation is an integral feature of the plan of creation itself and was so from the start; second, this differentiation is part of man's unique humanity because it is connected with the image of God which he bears; third, sexuality is part of man's finiteness, because God the creator is not himself sexual; fourth, the difference between the sexes is both sharp and permanent and is therefore not to be in any way blurred; and fifth, the two sexes are incomplete in their humanity without one another.

Footnotes

1. C.A. Simpson, "Exegesis of Genesis", The Interpreter's Bible, (Nashville, New York, 1952), 1:483
 2. Genesis 1:26
 3. Genesis 1:31
 4. W. G. Cole, Sex and Love in the Bible, (New York, 1959), P. 199
 5. Genesis 1:31
 6. C. A. Piper, The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage, (Digswell Place, 1960), p.55
 7. Ibid, p.90
 8. Genesis 1:27
 9. Helmut Thielicke, The Ethics of Sex, (New York, Evanston, London, 1964), p.3
 10. Cole, p.9
 11. Simpson, 1:484
 12. Cole, p.186
 13. Simpson, 1:492
 14. Piper, p.90
 15. Cole, p.204
 16. Ibid, pp. 198-199
 17. Genesis 2:27
 18. Deuteronomy 3:21
 19. Cole, p.351
 20. Genesis 1:31
 21. Ibid, 2:18
 22. Ibid, 2:23
 23. Ibid, 2:18
 24. Gerhard Von Rad, Genesis, (Philadelphia, 1961), p.80
 25. Thielicke, p.4
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Chapter Two: Sexual Terminology

We now turn to a study of several distinctive Biblical terms for the sex act and sexual anatomy. Our motive for so doing is the hope that these terms will reveal certain underlying attitudes in Biblical thought towards the purpose and value of sex. Since, as we saw in the Introduction, there is in the Bible no real Hebrew or Greek equivalent to the English word "sex"¹, and since there is no direct and precise Biblical definition of its purpose and value, we are forced to examine, among other things, the Biblical terminology for it, hoping that we will be thus enabled to infer some conclusions. In short, our presupposition is that the Biblical "sex language" may reveal some Biblical ideas of sex itself. With this assumption, then, we now examine these terms.

By far the most common term for the sex act in both the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) is "to know", (LXX γινώσκειν). Used in a specifically sexual sense, γινώσκειν and its forms and derivatives outnumber the next most common Biblical term "one flesh" (σάρκα μίαν NT and LXX) by at least eighteen to five. And of the five uses of "one flesh", four are direct quotations from Genesis 2:24, of which two are gospel parallels. This term, therefore, cannot by any means be

classes as a common one in the Hebrew or New Testament Greek languages.

On the other hand, while the more frequent use of "to know" does not necessarily mean that it is the most significant of the two terms, certainly it does mean that of these two it is the most likely to reflect the common, ordinary, underlying Biblical attitudes, whether or not those attitudes are the most distinctive or important ones. "To know", then, simply because of its prolific use, will be the first sexual term we will study.

Γινώσκειν is a common Greek word, both in the LXX and in the NT (in which it takes the form γινώσκειν). G. Abbott-Smith in A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament defines it as follows: "to be taking in knowledge, come to know, recognize, perceive, understand."² Bultmann, in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament points out that this word "...denotes in ordinary Greek the intelligent comprehension of an object or matter..."³ That is, its usual non-canonical use reflects the Greek concept of objective, detached, contemplative knowledge. "(Γνώσις), is achieved in all the acts in which man can attain knowledge, in seeing and hearing, in investigating and reflecting."⁴ In this sense, one can know a person in Greek thought, simply by objectively noting

their personal attributes in an almost exclusively empirical way. "To know" is to observe in as uninvolved a fashion as possible.

In the Biblical use, however, particularly in the LXX, we note a decisive contrast. For the LXX use of $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ is much broader than the Greek, and reflects the Biblical concept of knowledge and how it is attained. For in the OT

"---the element of objective verification is less prominent than that of detecting or feeling, or learning by experience. ---The distinctive feature, however, is that the concept of knowledge in the OT is not determined by the idea that the reality of what is known is most purely grasped when personal elements are obliterated between the subject and object of knowledge, and knowledge is reduced to contemplation from without. On the contrary, the OT both perceives and asserts the significance and claim of the knowing subject."⁵

The Bible, in other words, extends the use of $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ to include the knowledge gained by personal contact, experience, and involvement with the object to be known. It is interesting, for example, that the noun " $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ " is much rarer in the LXX than the verb form. Action and reaction are in this way implied. "To know", therefore, connotes a two-way experiential relationship between the subject and object. And it is in this sense that we are to understand its Biblical use with regard to personal relationships in general, and sexual intercourse in particular.

At this point we must make a brief digression in the interests of accuracy. For it is necessary to note that some

texts of the LXX occasionally substitute ἐπιγινώσκειν for γιγνώσκειν . This is an important observation because we will be relying on the LXX rather than the Masoretic Text for our OT analysis of this term. If some references are looked up, therefore, variant readings may appear, depending on which edition of the LXX one happens to have in hand. Such a variant reading occurs, for example, in 3 Kings 21:41 (RSV 1 Kings 20:41). Here Codex Alexandrinus reads "ἔγνω αὐτὸν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ", while Codex Vaticanus reads "ἐπέγνω αὐτὸν ..." The Rahlfs edition of the LXX follows the latter reading, while the RSV translates "the king of Israel recognized him..."

However, the very fact that such an interchange between γιγνώσκειν and ἐπιγινώσκειν is so easily made, indicates that there is a very close similarity of meaning between them. We have noted Abbott-Smith's definition of γιγνώσκειν . His corresponding definition of ἐπιγινώσκειν is "to observe, perceive, discern, recognize, discover, ascertain and determine".⁶ He further points out that while γιγνώσκειν usually translates the Hebrew יָדָע, ἐπιγινώσκειν commonly translates יָדָעָה. However, this distinction is not absolutely consistent, for ἐπιγινώσκειν is also sometimes used for יָדָע. Since, as we shall presently see, יָדָע is the Hebrew word for knowing which is invariably applied to sexual intercourse rather than יָדָעָה, and since either γιγνώσκειν or ἐπιγινώσκειν

can be used to translate יָדָה, we will, for the purposes of this study, treat them as synonyms.

Further justification for this procedure can be gained by referring to Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. For according to Bultman's analysis of γινώσκειν in it, in the NT ἐπιγινώσκειν is often substituted for γινώσκειν with no apparent difference in meaning⁷, while "in the LXX the two terms are often used as equivalents."⁸ Because of this similarity in meaning, therefore, we will simply ignore any discrepancies between various texts and editions of the LXX in their use of these two words, and we will regard them as synonyms in the NT.

In any event, although ἐπιγινώσκειν can translate יָדָה, I could not find one instance in the Old Testament in which it did so when יָדָה was used in a specifically sexual sense.⁹ Nor do Hatch and Redpath list any variant texts of the LXX in which it is so used.¹⁰ For this reason I have not attempted to account for or even to mention all the verses in which ἐπιγινώσκειν is used, although I have attempted to list the vast majority of the verses in which γινώσκειν is used to indicate a personal relationship of any kind. That is, although γινώσκειν and ἐπιγινώσκειν are close in meaning, because ἐπιγινώσκειν never translates יָדָה when יָדָה is used of sexual intercourse. I have concentrated on γινώσκειν rather than ἐπιγινώσκειν. Our chief concern, therefore, will be for γινώσκειν,

although from time to time ἐπιγινώσκειν may appear as its synonym in the sense of inter-personal relationships of a non-sexual character in certain texts of the LXX.

It is important to our understanding of "to know" in the sexual sense, to note that it is also used of asexual inter-personal relationships, both between human beings, and between human beings and God. Of course, it is also used in the sense of apprehending knowledge and information without any deeper relationship at all implied, as in Gen. 3:7 where Adam and Eve knew they were naked; and John 11:24 where Martha states "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." But inasmuch as the entire range of the Biblical use of to know is beyond the scope of this work, we will examine its use to denote personal relationships only. We will, therefore, now note briefly those passages in the Bible which use γινώσκειν to describe non-sexual inter-human relationships, and then those which use it to describe the God-human relationship. With this as background, we will then be in a favourable position to appreciate the full significance of γινώσκειν as it applies specifically to sexual intercourse.

Some passages which apply γινώσκειν to ordinary non-sexual human relationships are Gen. 29:5; Deut. 9:24, 33:9; 2 Kings (RSV 2 Sam.) 22:44; 3 Kings (RSV 1 Kings) 21:41 (RSV 20:41); Isa. 61:9; Matt. 7:23; Luke 24:35;

1 John 3:1. If, in the wisdom literature, wisdom may be considered a personification, we might also add Prov. 1:2; 31:23; and Ecc. 1:16 (RSV 1:17); and 8:16. Further, if a relationship with an animal (a non-sexual relationship, that is) may be considered "personal", we might also cite Isa. 1:3.

Although it would be most convenient to be able to point out a very forceful meaning in *γινώσκειν* as it is used in the above references, honestly unfortunately compels us to admit that actually it is used in an almost casual way in virtually all of them. So loosely is it employed, in fact, that only two senses may be discerned, not always distinct from one another, in which it is used in the LXX references, and neither of these senses has any extraordinary implication. For in the first place it seems merely to imply simple acquaintance with a person or persons. We observe this sense in Gen. 29:5. Jacob, in a strange land, asks some shepherds if they "know Laban, the son of Nahor." They reply " 'We know him' ". Nothing further than a superficial friendliness is indicated. Other passages employing "to know" in this sense are Deut. 9:23; 33:9; and 2 Kings (RSV 2 Sam.) 22:44. In each of these acquaintance only can be inferred.

In the second place it is also used to indicate recognition from past acquaintance or recognition because of distinctive characteristics. We observe the former in 3 Kings

21:41 (RSV 1 Kings 20:41), in which passage King Ahab "knew" (RSV "recognized") a disguised man as one of the prophets.

The latter is evident in Isaiah 61:9, in which it is promised that the descendents of Israel "shall be known among the nations", presumably because they will then be the restored community under God's lordship and therefore morally and otherwise distinctive. Nothing more than normal cognitive recognition is clearly implied in this category.

The casualness with which this word is used for inter-human relationships is perhaps well indicated in Isaiah 1:3, in which Isaiah represents the Lord as saying that "the ox knows its owner." It is true that the relationship here implied may not be of the same calibre as that which the shepherds intended to imply when they said that they knew Laban (Gen.29:5). But the very fact that the same word is used to describe both relationships seems to indicate that it can be used in a most facile fashion. If, then, "to know" can equally well be used to denote an ox-master association as a man-to-man relationship, we are forced to conclude that when it is used of ordinary human relationships at all, it is done so in an unconsidered sort of way, without any profound or forceful implications intended.

As we proceed to our New Testament references, however, we immediately sense a new subtlety. For in the three

which we have cited, *γινώσκειν* is applied to relationships between Jesus and men, or vice-versa. At this point we encounter a theological complication. For Christian theology might well tell us that we should subsume our discussion of *γινώσκειν* as it applies to Jesus under our discussion of it as it applies to God. But these three references have been included in our discussion of "to know" in purely human relationships because they merely mean ordinary human recognition, acknowledgement, or acquaintence. There is nothing to indicate a profounder relationship than this at the particular moments in which the passages are set. It may well be, of course, that there existed a previous relationship in which the people concerned knew Jesus or Jesus knew them in a most profound way. But in these specific passages they simply recognize or do not recognize one another whether or not a previous relationship existed. The new subtlety of meaning which seems to occur here, then, does so, perhaps, partly because of our theological associations with Jesus, and partly, as we shall see soon, because there are other NT passages in which knowing or not knowing Jesus (and vice-versa) does seem definitely to imply a great deal more.

Our first reference, Matt. 7:23, is a possible

exception in this group. In this passage, Jesus, in speaking of the last day, remarks that at that time he might say to "evildoers" "'I never knew you; depart from me.'" This is a quotation from Ps. 6:8, although the original passage does not contain the word "know".

In stating the he never knew the evildoers, Jesus might be implying that they never had a close, loving and obedient association with him. On the other hand, he may simply be saying that because the evildoers bore bad fruit he did not recognize them as one of his own. Inasmuch as in this context he is speaking of good and bad fruit from good and bad trees and knowing people by their fruits, the latter interpretation would seem to have credence. This, of course, is assuming that this saying is still in the original context in which Jesus uttered it, a fairly large assumption when dealing with Jesus' sayings as recorded in Matthew. But even if it were an interpolation into a collection of other sayings, it still would reflect the redactor's use of the word "know", and, of course, the redactor's assumptions form a part of the Biblical thought pattern too. There is a sense, then, in which it is "Biblical" and can represent Biblical thought even if it is out of context or redactional altogether. Therefore, although there is room for doubt as to the exact meaning

of "to know" in this context, there is no decisive evidence to indicate anything more than recognition or acknowledgement.

Luke 24:35 is the story of Cleopas' and the other disciple's sudden recognition of Jesus in Emmaus. Not knowing the risen Christ as they walk the road with him, they suddenly perceive who he is at supper. "He was known to them in the breaking of bread." The meaning here is both clear and simple: whereas they did not recognize him on the road, they did so later. "To know" here implies the common experience of recognizing a past friend. True, this previous friendship may have gone far beyond the depth of ordinary acquaintance. But in this particular moment of time recognition is all that transpired.

In the LXX and the NT, therefore, γινώσκειν in various forms, derivatives and compounds is sometimes utilized to denote a non-sexual relationship between human beings. This relationship may be an acquaintance, but not necessarily a deep one. On the other hand, it may not be a true relationship in the normal sense of the word at all, but may merely be recognition or acknowledgement. In short, it would appear that the Biblical use of "to know" to describe human relationships of a non-sexual character may well convey little more wealth of meaning than our own.

We will now examine γινώσκειν as it applies to the

divine-human encounter. We have seen that in addition to inter-human relationships, "to know" also denotes the relationship between God and men. Indeed, of its approximately 102 uses in the Bible in a personal sense, only 15 apply to a non-sexual human association. Significantly, and in marked contrast, a full 68 of its occurrences denote the divine-human encounter, including the relationship between Jesus and his followers and contemporaries. In terms of sheer quantity alone, therefore, this use of $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ is an important one in the Bible, and may therefore cast much light on its use in the sexual sense. We look at it now, then, as it applies to the interaction between God and men.

The following verses in the LXX employ it in this sense: Gen. 39:23; Ex. 33:17; Nu. 12:6; Deut. 34:10; Ju. 2:10; 1 Sam. 3:7; Job. 36:26; Ps. 9:16; 36:10; 138:6; 139:1,14,23; Hosea 5:3; 6:3; 8:2; 11:12; 13:4; Amos 3:2; 4:12; Na. 1:7; Isa. 11:9; 19:21; 43:10; 45:4; 52:6; Jer. 4:22; 9:3,24; 12:3; 22:16; 31:34; Ezek. 20:5,9; 35:11; and Dan. 11:32,38. "To know" is also frequently used in Ex.(6:7; 10:2) and Ezekiel (12:15; 20:12) in the sense of knowing that God is Lord, or that the Lord has done some mighty act. Similarly, in Deuteronomy it is used as a command to know these things (Deut. 4:39; 9:3,6). We will not discuss these last two categories, however, as they do not indicate really a relationship between people and the Lord, but only refer to a cognitive

apprehension of God's Lordship or activity.

The following NT verses use $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\alpha\iota$ of the divine-human relationship: Luke 16:15; John 1:10,49; 2:25; 10:14, 15, 27; 14:7,9,17; 16:3; 17:3,25; Acts 19:15; Romans 1:21; 11:34; 1 Cor. 1:21; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:16; Gal. 4:8,9; Phil. 3:10; 11 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 8:11; 1 John 2:2; 2:4,13; 3:6; 4:2,6,7,8; and 5:20.

The question now before us is this; where, in the Bible, is "to know" used in the sense of a two-way, experiential, involved, interaction which Bultmann described as the typically Biblical sense, and which we outlined on page 29? We have seen that the evidence from the contexts themselves gave us no clear proof of such a sense in the inter-human usage. On the contrary, in that usage it seemed to have a very superficial sense indeed. Are we then to infer the same as to its divine-human usage? Clearly, we are not. For in this use a much deeper and profounder implication is apparent. Not always is this evident from the verses involved themselves, however, or even from their immediate contexts. But rather we conclude this from the context of Biblical history itself. That is, a casual examination of the above passages may not in itself convince us that "to know" implies any more significant a relationship when it is applied to the divine-human encounter than it does when applied to an ordinary inter-human association. But when we place these texts

in the context of the election of Israel and her subsequent mission, we immediately discern a new wealth of meaning in their use of $\gamma\gamma\upsilon\acute{\omega}\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$. God "knows" Israel in general, and certain individuals within her in particular, and he "knows" them in a most unique, distinctive, and significant sense.

On what are we to base such a conclusion? How are we to understand what God's act of "knowing" them meant to the people of Israel? What significance would this word have for them in this sense? One method we might employ to answer these questions would be to explore the entire Biblical understanding of the covenant relationship, and to deduce from this what it meant to be "known" by the Lord. For it is noteworthy that the prophets make the most prolific use of $\gamma\gamma\upsilon\acute{\omega}\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ in this sense, and the prophets, of course, typically are very concerned about the covenant relationship. Indeed, such passages as Amos 3:2 "'you only of all the families of the earth have I known'", and Ezekiel 35:11 "'I will make myself known among you'", suggest that "to know" has a very close connexion with the covenant relationship and may, indeed, be the very basis of it. That is, God "knowing" Israel and vice-versa, is the very basis and foundation of the covenant between them.

If, therefore, we fully comprehended the implications of the covenant relationship, we would be in a good position

to understand what "knowing" meant to the Hebrews, at least as it relates to the divine-human encounter. Such a thorough-going study, however, is not possible within the scope of this work. What is feasible, however, is to summarize, briefly, some of the more important implications of the covenant, and thus arrive at some tentative conclusions as to what $\gamma\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ might mean when it is used of the relationship between Yahweh and the Hebrew people. With this objective in mind, then, we will briefly outline some implications of the covenant relationship. However, to survey the entire body of OT literature would be both too general and too extensive a project. One representative OT passage describing the covenant, (Nehemiah 9:6-38) would, however, be within our range of endeavour. We will select this as the representative text because it is a prayer in which Ezra surveys the history of the covenant, acknowledges that it has been broken, and on the basis of all this, leads the new post-exilic community into a new covenantal agreement. It therefore concisely reflects many of the major significant elements in the Hebrew understanding of the divine covenantal pact.

There are many nuances of meaning and many implications in this passage. I believe, however, that five major elements in the Hebrew understanding of the covenant which are relevant to our study can be picked out. In the first

place, in 9:7-8, Ezra recounts the call of Abraham and the promise which God made to him that his descendants would inherit a land. The idea of election, therefore, is one major element here.

Second, in verses 9-12, it is recalled how the Lord delivered Israel from Egypt, performed mighty works in order to effect the escape, and led the way out with a pillar of fire. After electing Abraham, then, God continued to work out his purpose. The faithfulness of God is thus a second element.

Third, Ezra narrates the giving of the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai (verses 13-14). God in this way makes his will and nature known. Self disclosure is thus a feature of the covenant.

Fourth, in verses 16-25, the molten calf in the wilderness is remembered, and Israel's early apostasy and desire to return to Egypt are contrasted with God's watchful care, in which he fed them the manna, provided water to drink, gave them the victory over their enemies, and established them in the land of Canaan. God's continuous love and care in the covenantal relationship are thus emphasized.

Finally, in the fifth place, Ezra points up Israel's continuing unfaithfulness, her disobedience to the Law, and

her rejection of the prophets, God's appointed agents of reform and reclamation. But in his righteous judgment God still acted patiently and mercifully, for "'Many times thou didst deliver them according to thy mercies.'"¹¹ Judgment and doom came, but they were in spite of God's predilection to show love and patience, for even in his judgement "...thou didst not make an end of them or forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God."¹²

These same ideas are also reflected in Hosea, who portrays Israel as a faithless harlot, with whom God still desires to have a "knowing" covenant with all the above elements.

"I know Ephraim,
and Israel is not hid from me;
for now, O Ephraim, you have
played the harlot,
Israel is defiled.
Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
For the spirit of harlotry is within
them,
and they know not the Lord."¹³

But God's spirit of "knowing" is proffered by contrast:

"Let us know, let us press on to know
the Lord;
his going forth is sure as the
dawn;
he will come to us as the showers..."¹⁴

Among other things, therefore, to be in a "knowing" relationship with God involves the ideas of God's choice or election; his faithfulness to the agreed relationship; his self disclosure or personal exposure; his faithful love and care in

the face of faithlessness; and his mercy and grace even in the act of judgment.

Conversely, and in this particular passage by implication, for Israel to "know" God implies strict allegiance to him because of his selection of her (cf. the golden calf, Neh. 9:18), and, by corollary, strict faithfulness to the terms of the covenant; and a self-giving obedient commitment to him because of his self-disclosure in the Law (cf. they "cast thy law behind their back," Neh. 9:26). Thus, we can begin to perceive the OT concept of "knowing" as an experiential, interacting, two-way relationship. God "knows" Israel, and certain qualities are present in this "knowing" relationship; similarly, Israel "knows" (or should know) God, and certain qualities are (or should be) present in that "knowing" relationship.

It is also interesting to note that when the OT speaks of God "knowing" individuals there is also a wealth of forceful meaning. In Deut. 34:10, for example, we are told by an anonymous narrator that "...there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." The Lord, then, "knew" Moses, and in this individual relationship we can once again discern the same elements as those in the God-Israel covenant. There is election and response; faithfulness, self-disclosure and resulting commitment; faithful love and care in the face of faithlessness; and patience,

mercy, and grace. The two-way experiential reaction is again taking place in a "knowing" relationship.

Similar implications are present in the NT use of $\gamma\iota\upsilon\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ for the divine-human encounter. Indeed, it may well be that the OT connotations are simply assumed in the NT. It is interesting that $\gamma\iota\upsilon\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ in this sense occurs, only in John. And John, as is his custom, having acquired a distinctive term, proceeds to weave it through his entire work. Of the 32 times $\gamma\iota\upsilon\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ is used in the NT in this way, it is used in John 11 times, or almost one third of the total.

In John 10:14-15 we perceive very similar, although not exactly similar, elements as those in the OT "knowing" relationship. For we read "I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father..." Jesus is perhaps saying that by coming into the world and having it know him not, and by coming to his own and having them receive him not, and by coming as the good shepherd, the way and the truth and the life, the bread of life, the living water, the lamb of God, and the true vine, he was "knowing" his own. His own "know" him, conversely, as they receive him, believe in his name, and do the works of God by believing in him whom he has sent. In fact, one might postulate that one of John's chief interests is to trace the history of the interactions of this "knowing" relationship by describing how some

did "know" him, some did not, and how some came to do so. All the remaining ~~γινώσκω~~ passages in John support this: 2:25 "he knew all men"; 10:27 "'I know (my sheep)'" ; 14:17 "'if you had known me you would have known my father---- henceforth you know him'" ; 14:9 "'you do not know me Philip?'" ; 14:17 - the world does not know the Spirit; 16:3 "'they have not known the Father, nor me'" 17:3 "'that they may know thee (this is eternal life)'" ; and 17:25 "'the world has not known thee (O Righteous Father).'"

Once again by implication, we see that the ideal divine-human "knowing" relationship is one of election and response; self-disclosure and resultant total commitment; love and care in the face of faithlessness; patience, mercy, and grace. And once again we see that experiential interaction between two parties is assumed.

In our examination of ~~γινώσκω~~ as it applies to the divine-human encounter, then, we saw that it contains a wealth of significance for the Biblical writers. For this "knowing" relationship is exemplified in the covenant relationship and in Jesus' relationship with men. As such, therefore, its overtones of meaning are drawn from the very fonts and foundations of Biblical thought and experience themselves. And because of this, there can be scarcely any Biblical insight, concept, or idea which is not somehow

related to this "knowing" relationship. "To know" is a term incalculably rich in connotations.

Having considered $\gamma\gamma\upsilon\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ as it is used of the man-man and God-man relationships, therefore, we turn now to a discussion of its specifically sexual usage. The following LXX and NT passages employ it in this sense: Gen. 4:1,17,25; 19:8; 24:16; 38:26; Numbers 31:17,18,35; Judges 11:39; 19:22, 25; 21:11,12; 1 Kings "RSV 1 Sam.) 1:19; 3 Kings (RSV 1 Kings) 1:4; Matt. 1:25; and Luke 1:34.

As we have already noted¹⁵, the Hebrew word $\gamma\gamma$ is the root for "to know" in the sexual sense in the OT, and is translated in the LXX by $\gamma\gamma\upsilon\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$. For the two times that "to know" is thus employed in the NT, $\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ is used. The RSV translates it usually as "know", in both the OT and NT, three exceptions being Gen. 38:26; Judges 21:11 and Luke 1:34. In the former two, $\gamma\gamma\upsilon\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ is translated "to lie with", and in the latter " $\pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\iota \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron \acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota \acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha \acute{\omicron}\upsilon \gamma\upsilon\upsilon\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\omega$ " is rendered "How can this be, since I have no husband?" But never, however, is "to know" translated as "sex" or "sexual intercourse" by the RSV.

In view of this, it could be suggested that in these verses $\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ may not have a sexual implication at all, or that sex is only part of the intended meaning. What, after all, causes us to decide that these verses are sexual in meaning,

whereas those which we categorized under non-sexual inter-human relationships are not? The answer, of course, is context. In Gen. 4:1, for instance, we read "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain---." Here a clear link is made between "knowing" and conception. Similarly in Judges 11:39, it is mentioned that Jephthah's daughter "had never known a man", meaning, clearly, that she was a virgin, and therefore her sacrifice was doubly tragic. In Hebrew psychology there would not be anything tragic at all in the fact that she had never known a man in the sense of acquaintance only. In Matt. 1:25, the virginity of Mary is disclosed and emphasized by saying that Joseph "knew her not until she had borne a son." In each of the verses that we have listed as containing sexual meaning, therefore, the context clearly indicates that *γινώσκω* means sexual intercourse.

Even a cursory examination of these verses reveals that "to know" is used of almost all types of sexual intercourse, and of both men and women as well. It is used of homosexual intercourse, for example, in Judges 19:22; of husband and wife in 1 Kings (RSV 1 Sam.) 1:19; of prostitutes in Gen. 38:26; of rape in Judges 19:25; of men in Gen. 38:26, and of women in Numbers 31:35. "To know" is thus not confined

to heterosexual marital sex, but seems to apply to the sex act in general.

Having established $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\tau\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ as a bona fide term for the specific act of sexual intercourse, then, we now must face the question "what is its real significance in this usage?" Simply to note that it is used of the act itself does not really further our study appreciably, although we must establish that fact as a basis for anything further. But this does not of itself help us unless we appreciate at least something of the significance of its use for sex. In other words, why is "to know" the most common designation for the sex act?

Of course, it was to provide an answer to this question that we explored its usage for the man-to-man and God-to-man relationships. For it is our contention that all the implications that we noted in connexion with those usages are also present in its specifically sexual usage. That is to say, when it is applied to the sex act, it carries all the connotations of recognition, acquaintance, election, self-giving etc. that it carries in these other uses. We understand "to know" in the sexual sense, as we understand it in the other senses.

A critic might well ask at this point "Why must this sequence be followed? Why do its other two interpersonal uses qualify its sexual use? Why does not its sexual use qualify

them?" To be specific, when Amos represents the Lord as saying "You only of all the families of the earth have I known", does this use of "know" help our understanding of it in the sexual sense, or does its sexual sense help us in our understanding of it here? There are several good reasons to believe that the former is the soundest hypothesis.

First, when $\delta\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ is used of the man-to-man or the divine-human relationships, the contexts, either historical or literary, almost invariably give us a clear indication of what exactly this word means in that particular verse. Of the man-to-man relationship, for instance, we saw that in some contexts "to know" implied simple recognition; in others, it implied past acquaintance. Or of the divine-human encounter, we noted that the historical context gave us several clues as to its significance, such as election, patience, self-giving, etc.

But in its sexual sense, neither the historical nor the literary contexts give us much of an understanding. It is true that the contexts tell us that it is a sexual meaning that is intended, even as the other contexts told us that it was a divine-human encounter that was intended, or a non-sexual human relationship. But, whereas those contexts did also tell us what "to know" implies in its sense of non-sexual human relationship or divine-human encounter, the corresponding

contexts of this use do not tell us anything more than that it means coitus per se. Since neither the literary nor historical contexts indicate what connotations we are to attach to $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\tau\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ when used in this sexual sense, therefore, we must infer its full connotations when used in this sense from its use in the other senses.

Second, $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\tau\epsilon\iota\upsilon$ is simply used of the God-human relationship more often than it is of copulation (approximately 50 more times). And although, as we have seen, it is also used of the God-human relationship more than of the inter-human relationship, the contexts of the latter delimit its meaning, whereas they do not in its sexual use. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to assume that its connotations in its use of the divine-human association would apply to its use of copulation rather than vice-versa. In other words, all else being equal, its common connotations and associations would probably cling to it even when it is used for a special act. Indeed, it may well have been used for that special act precisely because it did bear certain commonly understood connotations.

This leads us directly to the third reason. Why, of all the words in the Hebrew and Greek vocabularies, is "to know" used for coitus? Gerhard Von Rad suggests that "It is modesty of language which uses the verb 'yada' (to know)

to designate sexual intercourse."¹⁶ This may well be, but why did modesty dictate that "to know" be used? Is it sheer poverty of language? In view of the vividness and earthiness of Hebrew in general, this does not seem too likely a solution. But surely one reasonable answer might be that it was used because, perhaps quite unconsciously, the Hebrews recognized that its many connotations which we have noted fitted their experience of the nature of the sex act. When men and women "know" one another in the act of sex, many of the same elements are present as when human beings "know" one another in an ordinary way, and, more particularly, when they are "known" by God. In my opinion this insight is implicit in the Biblical use of "to know" for the sexual union.

We have, then, examined ~~γινώσκω~~ as it is used of inter-personal relationships of any sort. And we have seen that it is used of three types of relationships: ordinary non-sexual human relationships, the divine-human encounter, and the sex act. We further discovered that when it is used of the sex act, it embodies all the connotations of the other two. That is, when men and women "know" one another, personal acquaintance, recognition, selection and response, self-disclosure, total commitment, love and care, patience, mercy, and grace are all implied. Not, of course, that all are

invariably present, or that all are present in equal quantities. But rather, in the Biblical experience, these elements are constantly acting, reacting, and interacting in various proportions, quantities and qualities as men and women encounter one another in sex. "To know" is impregnated with these overtones and implications. And all this, as we see in our final chapter, has immense bearings on the Biblical understanding of the purpose and value of sex.

We turn now to the Biblical term "one flesh". As we saw in our introduction to this chapter, "one flesh" (σάρκα μίαν) is not at all as frequently employed as is γινώσκω. In point of fact, as we discovered, it is used only five times in the entire Bible, while γινώσκω is used of sex at least eighteen times. At that point we also briefly raised the question as to whether or not its relatively rarer use indicates a lesser significance. It will now be our contention that common assumptions to the contrary notwithstanding, σάρκα μίαν is not, in fact, nearly as significant as γινώσκω so far as the purpose and value of sex itself are concerned, and indeed, that it is extremely doubtful if this term applies to the sex act per se at all. Our reasons for arguing thus are as follows:

First, the five passages in which this term occurs are Genesis 2:24; Matt. 19:4,5,6; Mk. 10:6,7,8; 1 Cor. 6:16; and Ephesians 5:31. As we noted, Matthew and Mark are

parallel references, and all four of the New Testament texts are quotations from Genesis 2:24. Thus, *σάρκα μίαν* really only occurs once in the Bible in any original or primary sense. All other uses are conscious quotations from this one original. If, therefore, this term were as vitally important to our understanding of sex per se as such scholars as D. S. Bailey¹⁷ and Otto Piper¹⁸ believe it to be, it receives remarkably light usage. Inasmuch as it is not once recorded between J (Gen. 2:24) and Jesus, it would seem that there is a gap of almost 950 years in which it was relatively unused. Even if this is later than J, it is still a long gap. This, then, is incredibly rare usage for a term with as much importance as these men assign it, and this infrequently contributes to our suspicion that it is not too significant in Biblical thought.

On the other hand, however, it can legitimately be argued that since it appears in key passages, namely a creation narrative, the teachings of Jesus, and the letters of Paul, its infrequent use is not too important a factor, and that it is given a special emphasis and therefore a special importance. This might be true so far as it goes. What is still unaccounted for, however, is the fact that in each of these references except one, it is quite evidently used not of sex per se, but of the marriage relationship in general.

And this is our second reason for consigning it to relative unimportance for the purpose and value of sex. In all verses but one, it is used of marriage; and not specifically coitus.

Gen. 2:24, is, according to C. A. Simpson¹⁹, an aetiological comment by a writer slightly later than J, who sought to explain the origin of marriage on the basis of Eve's creation from Adam's rib. One flesh they were originally; one flesh they desire again to be. Although "this verse was not originally an affirmation that marriage was, from the beginning, by divine intent monogamous,"²⁰ nevertheless it is an attempt to explain why a man leaves his father and mother, thus cutting strongly rooted relationships, to take on a new relationship, that between himself and his wife. The practices of early Israel certainly were not monogamous, but as we saw, it was not the intention of the J addition to establish or even account for monogamy. The origin of marriage as he saw it and understood it seems to be his chief concern, and there is no conclusive evidence that he had the sex act particularly in mind. Of course, he no doubt would not separate the two as neatly as we have done. Rather, he would probably simply assume that sex is an integral part of marriage. Yet it is not sex that he has chiefly, precisely, and consciously in mind. But rather, it is the marriage relationship as a whole.

Matt. 19:4,5, and 6; and Mark 10:6,7, and 8 are gospel parallels, and are a part of Jesus' teaching on marriage. Pharisees approach Jesus and ask him if it is "lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause."²¹ He replies by reminding them that sexual differentiation is divinely ordained and that "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one..." He concludes by stating that no man should divide whom God has united.

Jesus is thus quoting Genesis 2:24 as the foundation of the indissolubility of marriage. It is the permanency of marriage that he is concerned about, not the nature of the sex act. It could be argued that it is coitus which makes the "one flesh" possible and marriage therefore indissoluble, and that this is what Jesus meant. This, however, is reading a presupposition into the text; there is no evidence whatever that that is what Jesus had in mind. He simply appears to be saying that for whatever reasons, marriage is as though two people were one, and that oneness should not be destroyed. Sex may be a part of this oneness; but nothing indicates that Jesus had it specifically in mind.

1 Cor. 6:16 may appear to be the exception. For at first glance it certainly does seem as though Paul is assigning *σάρκα μίαν* a specifically sexual meaning. In the general

context, he is speaking of Christian morality, and in the immediate context, of prostitution in particular. After stating that the bodies of Christians "are members of Christ,"²² he expostulates "Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two shall become one.'"²³

This passage is the authority for the rather common assumption that *σάρκα μίαν* is synonymous with "sexual intercourse" and that the state of "one flesh" is established exclusively by that act. It is argued that since so casual a sexual contact as union with a prostitute can create a "one flesh" relationship, then, logically, any and all sexual intercourse forms a "one flesh" association. *Σάρκα μίαν*, therefore, must be virtually interchangeable with the act of sex.

Proceeding upon this rationale, D. S. Bailey, for example, says the following.

"St. Paul contrasts two kinds of union. There is, first, that of the believer with Christ...analogically exemplified in the true 'henosis' of husband and wife... Second, there is union with a harlot... St. Paul, therefore, can set before the Corinthians two alternatives; union with Christ or union with a prostitute... The whole argument turns upon the fact that sexual intercourse, whether licit or illicit, has one inevitable consequence; (one flesh)..."²⁴

"So profound...are the consequences of sexual intercourse that they can only be adequately expressed by saying that every act initiates or maintains a state of 'one flesh'..."²⁵

Similarly, Otto Piper writes

"Lying at the very centre of the Biblical interpretation of sex we find the brief but significant sentence 'The two shall be one flesh'... Three ideas in particular are expressed thereby: 1. Sexual intercourse establishes an inner union between the two persons concerned. 2. That union is a 'unity of the flesh'... 3. This union can never be dissolved."²⁶

"The Bible calls the resulting union a unity of the flesh, and this idea forms the basis for the understanding and the ethics of sexual life in both Testaments."²⁷

"Unity of the flesh in the Biblical sense depends exclusively on the consummation of the reciprocal sexual relationship."²⁸

Both these scholars, therefore, believe that there is a clear link between the sex act and "one flesh". Indeed, they depend upon one another so closely, that they are almost synonymous. It would seem that "one flesh" pertains to marriage only to the extent that marriage involves sex, and that it can be established with anyone, anywhere, under any conditions with whom the sex act is practised.

In diametric opposition to this rather remarkable view, W. G. Cole protests "This represents a rather curious extension of the Old Testament concept of 'one flesh'... There is no such interpretation to be found in the Old Testament, which saw the state as characterizing a married couple who had bound the totality of their lives together until death. Paul perhaps went

too far in this respect..."²⁹ He writes further "This extension of...'one flesh' - which obviously applied to marriage - to any sexual union is, in the eyes of many New Testament commentators, highly questionable."³⁰

What, then, are we to make of this statement of Paul's? For he does seem to feel that any sex act does establish a "one flesh" relationship, and, therefore, he does seem to link sex and *σάρκα μίαν* in a most direct way. We could, of course, reiterate the fact that of the five occurrences of "one flesh" this is the only one which does so use it, and we could thus argue that to base so exhaustive a theology of sex upon it as does D. S. Bailey is a questionable practice. And this consideration should, of course, carry some weight. It does not, however, account for this particular passage.

We might also point out, however, an interesting little feature in Paul's wording here. For Paul does not say that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes "one flesh" (*σάρκα μίαν*) with her, but rather he becomes "one body" (*ἐν σῶμα*) with her. But if Paul believes that the sex act per se forms a "one flesh" union, then, why, when he is speaking of intercourse with a prostitute is it a "one body" rather than a "one flesh" relationship that is formed? Surely, if ever sexual intercourse were specifically

meant, it is here. Yet, apparently no "one flesh" is formed.

Yet, on the other hand, the very word *σῶμα* implies something even deeper than "one flesh", for it clearly implies a merger of two total selves. Bailey himself points out that *σάρξ* refers to the physical organism, while *σῶμα* implies the total personality.³¹ Could it be, then, that Paul is using *σάρκα μίαν* as a synonym for intercourse, and believes that this intercourse results in a "one body" relationship, a relationship that is at least as significant as "one flesh"? This does not seem likely. For in Ephesians 5:29-32, Paul uses the "one flesh" relationship as an analogy for Christ's relationship to the Church. He says "'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one (*καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν*).'" He then adds (significantly) "This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the Church." If, therefore, Paul conceived of *σάρκα μίαν* as the purely sexual act and *ἐν σῶμα* as the resulting deeper union, one would think that he would select the latter rather than the former as the appropriate analogy for Christ's relationship to his Church. Also, if it were as clear as that, he would not describe it as a "mystery." In other words, the only times that Paul refers precisely to the "one flesh" relationship are always in connexion with

marriage between a husband and wife, or between Christ and the Church. In either case it is not conclusively clear that he means the sex act itself alone. The only time when he does, perhaps, refer to the act of sex, he describes the resulting union as "one flesh", but as "one body." The Biblical evidence itself, then, does not seem to support the contention that "one flesh" depends "exclusively on the consummation of the ...sexual relationship"³² as Piper suggests, or that sexual union has "one inevitable consequence"³³ - that of a "one flesh" relationship as D. S. Bailey postulates. For Paul seems rather to believe that it is possible to have "one flesh" without sex at all (as between Christ and the Church if this description of that relationship be not purely metaphorical) and that sex may not result in "one flesh" (as between a man and a prostitute). Sex and *σάρκα πῶς* therefore, are not inevitably linked by the apostle.

What, then, does "one flesh" mean here? W. G. Cole³⁴ suggests that it means, as it does everywhere else in the Bible, the marriage relationship in general. How can this be? Cole points out that Paul may well have been referring, not to ordinary commercial prostitution at all, but to sacred prostitution. In a city such as Corinth, where pagan temples such as that of Aphrodite carried on extensive prostitution, this is a

plausible suggestion. If this were indeed the case, a new light is shed on our passage. For implicit in cult prostitution is the idea that through sexual intercourse one "marries" the deity of a given shrine or temple. Yet "The relationship between Israel and Yahweh was conceived metaphorically as a marriage bond, a state of 'one flesh' between God and his covenanted people. So Christ and his Church were, symbolically, groom and bride (Ephesians 5) and also 'one flesh'".³⁵ To "marry" a god other than Christ, then, would be sheer idolatry and apostasy.

This hypothesis gains credence when we reflect that if sexual intercourse with a prostitute established a "one flesh" relationship with her rather than with Christ, so also would marital sex if the husband or wife were an unbeliever. To be "one flesh" with an unbelieving spouse would as effectively remove one from the exclusive "one flesh" with Christ as it would to be "one flesh" with a street prostitute. Yet, Paul recommends that under normal circumstances a husband or wife remain with an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 17:13-16). Marriage with another god, however, is a different matter again. And this is exactly what intercourse with a cult prostitute implies. This might be why $\epsilon\upsilon\ \sigma\omega\pi\alpha$ is used of this union: intercourse with a cult prostitute symbolizes a

commitment of one's totality to an idol. But, when "marrying" Christ, a "one flesh" relationship is established that is similar to the total involvement between husband and wife. When one "marries" a pagan god, therefore, there is a total involvement, but one that is so idolatrous that it cannot be graced by the Biblical term for true marriage. Only a marriage between a husband and wife or between the Church and Christ can aspire to this sacred term. "One body" therefore conveys the same idea of totality as "one flesh", but not the same idea of sanctity. Thus, when Paul refers to becoming "one body" with a prostitute, he may well be speaking, not of the sex act in itself, but of divine "marriage" with an idol, which the act of sex here symbolizes. Hence, while he may well feel that sex is a normal feature of the "one flesh" relationship between men and women, he nevertheless applies this term not to sex specifically, but to the marriage relationship in general, as do Jesus and J.

Because of its very infrequent use, then, and because, when it is used, it is used not specifically of sexual intercourse but of marriage in general, *σάρκα πᾶν* is not a significant term for our study. It has been necessary to establish this, however, because, as we have seen, there have been attempts to base a theology of sex per se upon it, and it is popularly assumed that it implies sex itself. Of course, it is a moot question as to why the word "flesh" is used of the

marriage relationship. But inasmuch as this thesis is concerned with the purpose and value of sex itself, to explore such a question is beyond the limits of this study. In the meantime it is sufficient to know that *σάρκα μίαν*, as indicated by its contexts, refers to the marriage relationship. Sex is certainly included, but not specifically denoted. "One flesh", therefore, is not significant to the Biblical understanding of the purpose and value of sex.

We will conclude this chapter simply by listing several Biblical terms for the various sex organs and secretions. Because these terms are not for the sex act itself and are only indirectly connected with it, we will merely list them without unnecessary elaboration at this time. This relevance to our study will be seen in our concluding chapter, in which we will refer to them as they have any bearing on the Biblical understanding of the purpose and value of sex. They are as follows.

The Hebrew word *ו* sometimes, although not always, represents the male organs of reproduction. It is used of other things as well, being the general term "flesh". However, in the following references it is used specifically of the male sexual organs: Gen. 17:11, 14, 23-25; Exodus 28:42; Lev. 15:2-18; Ezek. 16:26; 23:20; 44:7, and 9. A random sampling of the RSV

translations gives us "her paramours...whose members were like those of asses" (Ez. 23:20), and "when any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean" (Lev. 15:2). Other verses (eg. Gen. 17:11) translate בשר as "flesh". The NT does not use this term (Gk. $\sigmaάρξ$) for the male member.

In addition, the word גיד , often rendered "thigh", "loin", and "side" sometimes refers to the sex organs, as in Gen. 24:2, 9; 46:26; 27:29; Exodus 1:5; and Judges 8:30. In the NT the word ὀσφύς is here used, meaning "loins" (Heb. 7:5 $\text{ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ}$, "from the loins of Abraham"). It is interesting here to note that three of these references (Gen. 24:2,9 and 47:29) speak of putting one's hand under the thigh of someone with whom one is swearing an oath. This, of course, is a euphemism of grasping the sex organ, and reveals the Hebrew consciousness of the sacredness and holiness of the sex organs.

Used to designate the genitals of either men or women, is the word "feet". Used of male genitals, it is found in Exodus 4:27; Ruth 3:7; and Isa. 6:2; 7:20. Used of women it is in Deut. 28:57, and Ezekiel 16:25. This meaning of "feet" poses some surprises. In Ruth 3:7, for example, it was popularly assumed that when Ruth uncovered Boaz's "feet" and lay down beside him, that a very platonic relationship was implied. Actually, however, the opposite meaning is intended: Ruth, to put it bluntly seduced Boaz.

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Other terms and euphemisms are "to pour out" for semen or the male member (Lev. 22:4; Deut. 23:1 respectively); (seed) John 7:42; Romans 1:3; "that which excites shame" - meaning the testicles, in Deut. 25:11; "nakedness (more often of female sex organs) in Lev. 18:6-19; 20:17-21; 1 Sam. 20:30; Lam. 1:8; Ezek. 16:37; 23:10, 29; and the same idea of shameful nakedness is present in Rev. 3:18, and 1 Cor. 12:23-24; the word for the uterus Gen. 29:31; Numbers 18:15; 12:12; Jb. 38:8; Jer. 1:5; 20:18; Exodus 13:12; 34:19; and Ezekiel 20:26: the word "breast", in Song of Songs 1:13; 4:5; 7:4, 8-9; 8:8, 10; Job 3:12; Joel 2:16; Hosea 2:2; Ezekiel 16:7; 23:3, 21: and Luke 11:27 and 23:29.

In this chapter, then, we have examined some distinctive Biblical terms for the sex act, sexual anatomy, and sexual secretions. We discovered that while **σάρκα μὴν** is not used specifically of sex, **ἐγγνώσκειν** is, and that there are in addition some unique Hebrew anatomical terms. Having discovered this, then, we will now turn to our next chapter.

Footnotes

1. Introduction, p.3
2. G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, (Edinburgh, 1960), p.92
3. Gerhard Kittell (ed.), Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, 1964), p.639

Footnotes (cont'd)

4. Ibid, p.690
 5. Ibid, p. 697
 6. Smith, p.168
 7. Kittell, p.703
 8. Ibid, p. 704
 9. E. Hatch, H.A. Redpath, Concordance to the Septuagint,
(Clarendon, 1954), 1:517-518
 10. Ibid, 1:267-270
 11. Nehemiah 9:28
 12. Ibid, 9:31
 13. Hosea 5:3-4
 14. Ibid, 6:3 (RSV), 6:4(LXX)
 15. Chapter 2, pp.31-32
 16. Gerhard Von Rad, Genesis, (Philadelphia, 1960), p.100
 17. D.S. Bailey, The Mystery of Love and Marriage, (New York, 1952),
p.43
 18. O.A. Piper, The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage, (Digswell
Place, 1960), p.22
 19. C.A. Simpson, "Exegesis of Genesis", The Interpreter's Bible,
(Nashville, New York, 1952), 1:500
 20. Ibid
 21. Matthew 19:3
 22. 1 Corinthians 6:15
 23. Ibid, 6:15-16
 24. Bailey, p.51
 25. Ibid, p.54
 26. Piper, p.52
 27. Ibid, p.26
 28. Ibid, p.25
 29. W.G. Cole, Sex and Love in the Bible, (New York, 1959), p.253
 30. Ibid, p.316
 31. Bailey, p.51
 32. Piper, p.25
 33. Bailey, p.32
 34. Cole, p.316
 35. Ibid, p. 317
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Chapter Three: Sex, Sin and Redemption

Two questions about the Biblical view of sex are common: "Does the Bible say that sex is a cause - or even the cause - of sin?", and, "If so, what part can it play in the life of the believer?" It is partly because the answers to these questions are absolutely vital to the Biblical understanding of the purpose and value of sex, and it is partly because they have sometimes been "Yes, sex was the cause of man's sin," and "Sex can play a procreative but subordinated part only in the life of the believer," that we have undertaken to consider these questions. For one cannot avoid suspecting that neither of these answers is true to the real Biblical witness: the Bible is far too robust and earthy for such an ethereal view as that. These answers simply do not seem to fit the general tone of the Biblical thought and approach to life, which appear rather to affirm the value of God's wordly creation than to deny it. Prodded by this uneasiness, then, we will in this chapter discuss some Biblical insights on the place of man's sexuality in sin and redemption.

Our basic text for this undertaking will be Genesis 3. This passage has been selected because in the first place, it is the classical Biblical statement of the origin and nature of

of sin; and in the second place, because exegetes have occasionally interpreted it as positing sex as the cause of the "Fall of Man" which this chapter purports to record. We will, of course, also draw on other Biblical literature from time to time. But essentially, we will base our study upon this passage.

Genesis 3, of course, is the famous story of the man, the woman, the snake, the forbidden fruit, the curse, and the expulsion from Eden. We will not even attempt to draw out all its implications. But rather we will consider it only as it relates to the two questions before us.

The narrative is a familiar one. The serpent, which is simply a literary device personifying evil, and which was perhaps drawn from the pagan myth which is the foundation of this tale, subtly and insidiously suggests to the woman that fear and jealousy prompted God to forbid the tree of life (or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). The woman, responding to this lure to "be like God", breaks the prohibition, eats the fruit, and shares it with the man. Immediately they are ashamed of their nakedness and weave skirts for themselves. God, "walking in the garden in the cool of the day" calls them out of hiding, and confronts them with their guilt. The man responds by blaming the woman, and the woman by blaming the snake. God then decrees the consequences of their disobedience.

He places a curse upon them all. The story closes with God clothing the man and woman, driving them out of the park, and placing a rotating, flaming sword at the entrance "to guard the way to the tree of life."

Two points of interest to our study immediately emerge. First, it is patently obvious that sex was not the cause of the curse and expulsion; and second, that sex was, however, profoundly affected by the act of disobedience. We will consider each point separately.

Sex certainly was not the cause of the Fall. This is true even though the story is not an historical account of the origin of evil, but is the story of how "Mr. Everyman" encounters it and reacts to it. In fact, quite the opposite is implied. Man sins not because of, but in spite of the essential goodness of creation of which sex is a part. In Chapter I we noted at some length that J believes in the divinely ordained and divinely created differentiation between the sexes. Although God created everything good¹, it was still "not good that the man should be alone",² so God created the woman as "a helper fit for him."³ Hence, sex is actually required to perfect creation. Further, in the P account, God expressly and unmistakably commanded the man and woman to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth--."⁴ How then could the man and woman be sinning if they merely obeyed? Surely, the sin would be to revoke this great

blessing and disobey! Nor can it be argued that they sinned by using sex for other than procreation. Although such an interpretation would greatly bolster Roman theology, there is, unfortunately, little if any evidence to justify it. Sex, according to J, is neither the tempter nor the sin. But rather the temptation is to usurp the place of God in his creation, and the sin is to disobey him on this account.

"Man's pretense at being the centre of his own world, along with the self-deception that is his worst folly and the pride that makes him arrogate to himself such a central position which rightly is God's alone - this is a...way of describing what Christian thought has called original sin."⁵

And in this continuing drama of temptation and sin, sex is almost completely irrelevant as a basic causation factor.

All this, however, is not to say that man's sexuality is not at all affected by sin. To the contrary: by virtue of the fact that sexuality is at the very base of the human structure and nature, it must inevitably be profoundly and immediately influenced by something as far-reaching as sin. For, of course, the tragedy of disobedience in Genesis 3 is that it affects not only man's "religious" life, but all of life in all dimensions and at all levels. "Sin and sex are not coterminous," says W. N. Pittenger, "But sexuality is so central and important in man's life that it can be used most easily for self-gratification and self-satisfaction, for the pretense and pride which are in man."⁶ J has perceived this profound truth and has built it into Genesis 3.

V.7 The very first area of his life which is polluted by sin, therefore, is man's sexuality. For instantly after eating the fruit "---the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons."⁷ Their sexuality, previously a blessing, now becomes something to be hidden. Their nakedness is something to be covered.

C. A. Simpson points out that it is typical Hebrew concreteness of expression which speaks here of "nakedness."⁸ For this entire episode is expressed not in abstract conceptualized terms such as "sin" and "temptation", etc., but rather is portrayed in a concrete, vivid, fast-acting life drama. It is not therefore now stated that the man and woman are now "sexually conscious", as contemporary psychology would put it, but rather dramatic action-events demonstrate that they are aware, even painfully so, that their sexual nature has been polluted by sin. They therefore seek to hide it as soon as possible.

It is interesting that shame is their reaction to their nakedness. Western twentieth-century man might well feel that embarrassment would be an equally appropriate reaction. Embarrassment implies self-consciousness, a reaction which moderns find both acceptable and manageable, while shame

connotes guilt, a reaction with which moderns feel much more uncomfortable. But Von Rad points out that

"Shame for our narrator, is the most elementary emotion of a guilt feeling at the deepest root of human existence, the sign of a breach that reaches to the lowest level of our physical being.... Man reacts to this innermost disturbance with a feeling of shame."⁹

Although in obedience they "...were both naked and not ashamed."¹⁰ in disobedience a deep and abiding shamefulness for their sexuality afflicts them.

Vss. 8-10 "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said 'Where are you?' And he said 'I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'"

Once again a prominent motif is that of nakedness.

But whereas they abhorred nakedness previously because of their shame in one another's presence, now they abhor it because they must appear in that state before God. First it evoked shame, now it evokes fear. To appear naked before the Lord God is a most fearful abomination.

It is noteworthy that there is a general distaste for exposure of nakedness in the Bible. Whether this story is a result of it or the cause of it, is, of course, a moot question. Inasmuch as J is a relatively old source, it is just possible that this story at least contributed to this widespread repugnance. This, however, is mere speculation,

and W. G. Cole believes the opposite.

"---since the Genesis narrative is a myth, it is the effect of Israel's distaste for nakedness, not its cause. The Yahwist, obviously borrowed the story from another culture and transformed it to make it carry his own message. Doubtless, the nakedness and the shame were already present in the original, and the Yahwist passed them along as he had found them."¹¹

In Chapter 2 we listed other passages which reflect this horror of nakedness.¹² Leviticus 18:6-19 is a good example, for in it we read (v. 15) "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness." Although this general passage is speaking of illegal marriage partners and not specifically of the horror of nakedness, it is still significant that "uncover nakedness" is the term that is used. Undoubtedly this term applies here to unwholesome sexual intercourse per se, and it is significant that it is used of this rather than the far more common $\gamma\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$. The term "nakedness" thus implies repugnance, horror, and abhorrence.

Revulsion from nakedness is also seen in the story of Noah's drunken orgy, and his covering by his three sons. Ham "saw the nakedness of his father"¹³ and told his two brothers, Sham and Japheth, who promptly covered him without looking at him (Gen. 9:20-28). But because Ham saw his father unclothed, he is roundly cursed by Noah, and condemned to be his brothers' slave forever.

Similarly, the Law provides strict regulations for modesty during cultic ritual. In Exodus 20:26, for instance, Moses is told "...you shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be not exposed on it." If the priest wore the usual short skirt, his genitals would be exposed to the worshippers if he were in an elevated position. Similarly, in Exodus 28: 42-43 it is commanded "And you shall make for them (the priests) linen breeches to cover their naked flesh; from the loins to the thighs they shall reach..."

This is in marked contrast to the fertility cults in which sexual organs were flagrantly displayed and even revered. Indeed, Israel's revulsion against cultic nakedness may have been, in fact, a reaction against sacred sexual cults. This, however, does not explain why there was this unique reaction. Why did the Hebrews simply not accept ritual exposure? As good an explanation as any seems to be that they had a special reverence for sexuality, a reverence based on the conviction that man is made in the image of God and that therefore was outraged by wanton irreverent self-exposure of something so closely tied to that image. But if covering the sex organs is a sign of reverence, then why, in Genesis 3 is the instinct to do so a direct and immediate result of sin? Perhaps the explanation is that J is not attempting to analyze or explain his repugnance for nakedness; he is simply preoccupied with

saying that sexual shame and fear are the twin consequences of sin, and that nakedness is a symbol of them.

However that may be, we are certainly now in a position to understand J's supreme literary skill when he forces the naked man and woman to confront God. Hebrew psychology was revolted by the idea of nakedness being viewed indiscriminately under any normal circumstances, and it was even more revolted by exposure during the worship of God. When, therefore, the man and woman must face God completely stripped (except for inadequate aprons) the shame and fear implied are indescribable. This in itself is a stupendously traumatic experience for the couple. They are guilty. And their sexuality has become to them a symbol of this guilt. It, rather than anything else is a guilt symbol because it is at the very heart and centre of their humanity and is yoked to their image of God. Its corruption by sin, therefore, is drastic and immediately obvious. And to encounter God with this total corruption in eminent danger of being exposed was a most fearsome experience indeed.

When they disobey God, therefore, and become alienated from him, their sexuality, once a thing of innocence and beauty, becomes, by contrast, something shameful and fearful. "Fear and shame are henceforth the incurable stigmata in the Fall of man."¹⁵

This, however, is by no means the end of the great tragedy. For not only are fear and shame now present, but they also turn out to be a wedge which drives the man and woman ever further apart.

Vss. 11-12 "(God) said 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate.'"

In his desperation to avoid the blame, the man betrays the woman. This is not a light matter. It is the first manifestation of a sinful self-centeredness which eventually destroys the true meaning of sexuality. It cannot be argued that the man ~~does~~ this simply because of a laudable attempt to be honest with God. He does it simply because he wishes to ascribe all guilt to her and thus save his own skin. He calculatedly attempts to place the guilt on the person with whom he was to be one. In obedience she was "a helper fit for him," about whom the man sang a song of ecstasy.¹⁵ Now, in disobedience, their sexuality is no longer an unbreakable bond. Betrayal is the order of the day.

Vss. 16-19 The final consequences to sex of man's sinfulness are here outlined. The couple's disobedience and resulting alienation from God result in an alienation from one another as well. This initial crack begins to widen. C. A. Simpson

points out that sex had now "been infected with evil when man in his desire for power disobeyed God. This had impaired the relationship between man and God and so had thrown the relationship between the man and his wife into disorder."¹⁶ Tensions within the individual sexuality of the man and the woman aid this escalating process of alienation.

For, in the first place, the woman's sexuality begins to show signs of internal stress. In verse 16a God says to her "'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children'".

This, of course, as C. A. Simpson points out, was originally an aetiological attempt to explain why it is that women suffer so very much pain in childbirth. Here, says J, is the explanation: in obedience multiplying and filling the earth is a great blessing (Gen. 1:25); but in disobedience it is painful. Yet, inevitably, this painful function belongs exclusively and irrevocably to women alone. Blessing in a sense it still is, but a painful one - containing both the elements of yearning and of apprehension.

This Hebrew conviction that children are a divine blessing is evidenced in many passages. Some of these are Gen. 9:1, 7; 19:30-38; 30:23; 38:11-26; 48:15-16; Ps. 127:3; 128:3; 1 Sam. 1:3-20; Isa. 4:1; and 1 Tim. 2:9-15. Indeed,

so vital was it to leave issue (particularly sons) that childlessness was actually considered a terrible curse. Genesis 19:30-38, 30:23 and 1 Sam. 1:3-19, are particularly good examples of this.

In 1 Sam. 1:3-19, for example, Hannah's childlessness was considered an affliction of the Lord, and she obviously believed that conception was a straight gift from him. In verse 1, for instance, we read a prayer in which she asked for this blessing: "'O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant, and remember me, and do not forget thy maidservant, but wilt give to thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life...'"

Herein is reflected the Hebrew belief that childlessness is due to a direct curse by God, and correspondingly, that conception is a mysterious act of divine generation within the sex act. Children are a divine blessing.

This can partly be accounted for when we reflect that to the Hebrews, particularly to Hebrew men, immortality itself consisted of having one's name perpetuated by a son. One lived on in one's children (Genesis 48:15-16).

J therefore points up a tension in woman and accounts for it. The tension is that she wishes for the blessing of

children, yet she also dreads the pain of bearing them. And this tension results from a basic distortion of the meaning of her sexuality which in turn resulted from her disobedience to God.

Woman also undergoes another tension, however. For in verse 16b God continues "...yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Helmut Thielicke guards this passage against irate feminists by pointing out that this is not a command, but is, to the contrary, a "prognostic curse."¹⁷ Similarly, Simpson says that "The implication is that the relationship between husband and wife was intended by God to be a mutual and complementary relationship of love and respect, not a relationship in which one dominates the other."¹⁸ Otto Piper, however, with staunch Germanic certitude comes to the rescue of the male camp:

"In spite of all contentions to the contrary, there is no natural harmony between the sexes... Although modern women are unwilling to recognize man's superiority, yet the possessive character of male sexuality speaks in no uncertain terms."¹⁹

It is singularly fortunate that it is not within the intent of this study to pronounce upon the question of the equality of the sexes in the Bible. Surely, however, it is significant that J, in his account of the origin of sexual differentiation, stresses not only the difference between the sexes, but also the utter mutual dependence between them (Gen. 2:18-24).

Neither can achieve full humanity without the other. In a patriarchal society, this is a most remarkable insight. Similarly, it is only after disobedience that the question of dominance comes up at all, and then male rule is proffered in the form of a curse. The point of all this, so far as our study is concerned however, is that because of disobedience, a tension is established within the sexuality of woman: she desires her husband, yet she must submit to his humiliating rule.

The desire to usurp the power and position of God was the cause of sin. The pride which lusts for power and domination may, perhaps, also be seen in the woman's wish to share the forbidden fruit with the man, thus insuring that he will in no way be superior to her.

"Having transgressed the Divine command, Eve tempts Adam too. She is angry that as a result of her transgression she has become inferior to him. Hence, in order to reduce him to her own level she attempts to persuade him to follow her in her wrong-doing. The divine curse...shows, however, that she has failed to reach her goal."²⁰

It could well be, therefore, that the division between the sexes began in this story not with the realization of nakedness, but when Eve attempted deliberately to infect the man with her disobedience. Her lust for power led her not only to disobey God, but also to render the man as sinful as herself in order better to control him. But the long term results were that painful tensions began to disrupt her own sexuality.

She desires children; yet they cause her pain at childbirth and hence fear. She longs for man; yet he is to rule over her. There is a fundamental breakdown in the meaning of her own femininity.

Similar tensions also appear within the man's sexuality.

Vss. 17-19

"And to Adam he said,
'Because you have listened to the
voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
"You shall not eat of it,"
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the
days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring
forth to you;
and you shall eat the plants of the
field.
In the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.'"

The man is thus destined to "rule" over the woman, not as a command or blessing, but as a curse. For this very lust to rule and possess was not only the cause of the sin in the first place, but it is now also a cause of the widening rift between himself and the woman, as well as the cause of the degradation of their very sexuality. Created for mutual love and fulfilment, they are now infected by the desire to control and use one another. It was the woman's wish to rule and

control the man that led her to share the forbidden fruit with him; and it is now the man's wish to rule and control the woman that is a continuing curse upon them both.

It is not even to transpire that the man will enjoy the fruit of his sin - his rule over the woman. All the fruits of sin turn to ashes in the mouth, including this one. For this pleasure of dominance is irrevocably linked with that of toilsome responsibility; the responsibility of extracting a living from the soil. Even this would not be intolerable, were it not for the terrible frustration which dogs all his efforts to exercise this responsibility. Thorns, thistles, sweat, and finally a dusty death are the results of all his labours under the sun. His work, as well as his sexuality has been rotted with the leprosy of sin.

This does not mean, of course, that work itself is a curse. In fact it, like the man's sexuality, was a central feature of life even in the paradisaical park (Gen. 2:15). But also like sexuality, it has been debased by the rot of sin. Hence there is a link between the work-curse and the sex-curse. The frustration and responsibility of work is, in part, a symbol of the destruction of true sexuality. For this work is part of the responsibility involved in "ruling" over and possessing the woman.

If Genesis 1-11 may be regarded as a magnificent

operatic overture to the Bible, in which themes and tones are touched upon which are later developed and exemplified in detail, then we may see this desire to use another's sexuality without the burden of responsibility and all the resultant self-destroying consequences actually worked out in the concrete history of Israel. The two stories Amnon and Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-29) and David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-12:23) are good examples of this. In the story of Amnon and Tamar, for example, the point does not turn upon the evil of incest, for at that time half siblings could marry, although a later law (Lev. 18:9) prohibited it. Rather, the point turns upon Amnon's desire to use and possess Tamar regardless of all consequences. The result, of course, was destruction to both. Amnon was assassinated at Absalom's instigation (Absalom was Tamar's full brother), and "Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent the long robe which she wore; and laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went."²²

The man's curse in Genesis 3 is here beautifully exemplified. Amnon wishes to use ("to rule") Tamar as a thing, not a person; and in this lust for power and possession, destroys the real mutuality of their sexual relationship. For after he had forced her "Amnon hated her with a

very great hatred; so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her."²³ Further, he wishes to "rule" without responsibility. This, of course, is why he does not treat her as a person. To respect another's integrity and dignity in the sex act is to undertake a certain responsibility for him, for it is to negate one's own desires, if necessary, for the sake of the other's selfhood. The profundity and depth of the debasement of Amnon's true sexuality are manifested in the ultimate misery and destruction which result. Sin results in self-destruction, and this is especially true when it reaches into the very heart of the nature of man - his creation in the image of God - his sexuality.

To usurp the prerogatives of God in the area of sexuality, then, is particularly dangerous. For this misuse of power has particularly drastic consequences in the lives and welfare of others. As Pittenger observes

"When man's sexual life is distorted, we witness both a symptom and a reactionary cause of human evil. ...The use of another personality to procure one's own ends in utter disregard of the good of the other as evil---as the crudest rape."²⁴

Yet, it is in the sphere of sex that this temptation is peculiarly insidious. For as J so profoundly portrayed, sexuality was the very first sphere of life to be tainted with the total corruption of sin.

Just as sin forces woman into the two tensions of desire for children versus the apprehension of pain on the one hand,

and a desire for man versus the humiliation of subjugation on the other; even so, man suffers from the tension of a desire to use woman on the one hand conflicting with the load of frustrating responsibility on the other. In the twentieth century, we have, of course, a more adequate explanation of the cause of birthpangs, and the struggle for dominance between men and women is, in some circles at least, now *passé*. Does this mean that J has no insight into the problems of the relationship between the sexes for all time? Has humanistic progress negated J's affirmations?

The answer, surely, is decidedly "no". It may have been that this curse was almost crudely aetiological in origin. But one still strongly senses that J is using these mythical explanations of natural and social phenomena to say something far deeper. In fact he may have had an aetiological purpose all his own. To the question "Why is it the almost universal human experience that sex is simultaneously everything, yet on the other hand incomplete in its very consummation?", he may be offering an answer rooted in the very depths of man's nature and destiny themselves. For it is true that human beings seem to sense that

in their sexuality and its fulfilment their entire personality is involved; yet even in its very completion there is a paradoxical element of emptiness and tragedy. Perhaps J is attempting to say that although sex was originally to complete humanity and to make two people one, nevertheless in its sinful and imperfect actual practise, it does this only partially. And to the extent that it does this only partially, the partners are vividly reminded of their continuing basic schism - a schism which is grounded in their sinfulness, and which extends into the very innermost reaches of their being. Thus the sex act simultaneously heals the breach between the sexes, and reminds them of it. It is a paradox of ecstasy and sadness. This curse, therefore, is a superbly concise literary statement of these shames, fears, tensions, and deep unfathomable longings and joys which are all paradoxical features of man's sexuality.

We have seen, then, that in the Biblical view, sex is not the cause of sin. Rather, the desire for God's power and the resulting disobedience to him are at its root. But because this disobedience distorts all of life it also distorts the image of God, which involves man's sexuality. And because this sexuality is so primary a feature in the structure of man, corruption by sin is both insidious and immediate. Sex does not of itself generate sin, then, but it is profoundly

affected by it.

As we consider the question of sex and redemption, our Biblical material becomes far more sparse. This raises a question: "Does this scarcity of material reflect an attitude that sex is somehow unredeemable and must therefore simply be negated and suppressed?" Surely it does not. Rather, a more tenable reason seems to be simply that the salvation of man's sexuality is assumed. That is, man is treated as a whole, in accordance with good Biblical thought, and sex is therefore not singled out. Just as sin corrupts all of man, even so, God redeems all of man - including his sexuality.

We have already noted several times that the Bible asserts that sexuality is at the centre of the human personality. If this is so, then it would be most unreasonable to affirm the salvation of the whole man - except his sexual nature! This would be tantamount to saying that everything about him is saved except his unique humanity! For as we saw, his sexuality is connected with the image of God which he bears and which ultimately is his uniqueness. To omit sex from the plan of redemption, then, would virtually render redemption itself utterly meaningless.

Although none of this is actually specifically stated,

certain NT verses do reflect this understanding. If we may say that part of the meaning of the Kingdom of God is Jesus himself, then Jesus' own conduct toward the opposite sex would reflect something of redeemed sexuality. Piper says of this "Jesus' personal attitude toward women taught his disciples what the true and ideal relationship between the sexes must be like."²⁵

Jesus' attitude toward women was truly remarkable for his era. We have noted that women were numerous among his following (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, "and many others".)²⁶ In addition we have on record several accounts of his dealings with individual women, such as Matt. 15:21-28 - the Syrophoenician Woman; John 4:7-30 - the Woman at the Well; John 8:1-11 - the Woman taken in Adultery; Luke 7:37-50 - The Woman of the City; Luke 10:38-42 - Mary and Martha; and Mark 5:25-34 - the Woman with the Hemorrhage.

Two of these John 8:1-11 and Luke 7:37-50 are of particular interest to us, for both have a definitely sexual question involved. In John 8:1-11 the woman taken in adultery is beheld as a person of worth, although her sinfulness is not condoned (v.11). After implying that no one who has contributed to her personal destruction has a right to destroy her completely

(" 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her'"), Jesus says "'Neither do I condemn you; go and do not sin again.'" The distortions, fears and shames of her debased sexuality are met by Christ, and by implication, redeemed. In a very real way, one senses, he is accepting her womanhood and helping her to realize what that womanhood really means. In other words, his acceptance of her does not involve denying her womanhood - it is as a woman, a sexually constructed human - that he encounters and redeems her.

The same principle applies in Luke 7:37-50. The epithet "a woman of the city...a sinner" implies some dark past, very possibly prostitution. But Jesus, rejecting Simon's revulsion against her (v. 39), accepts her tokens of repentance and offers forgiveness. And once again, there is no denial of her womanhood, but rather, by implication once again, there is an affirmation of its true meaning and nature. "Jesus' recognition of the real meaning of her act confirms her both in her humanity and in her womanhood."²⁷

Although it is always possible to read contemporary thought into Biblical texts, one still cannot escape the impression that Jesus is, in a patriarchal society, constantly reasserting J's insight as to the mutuality of the sexes. Indeed, one feels that he is attempting to penetrate the layers

of convention and sinfulness which surround sexuality, and to reconfirm what it really means to be a sexual being made in the image of God. One might wish to ask, why, in the light of this, Jesus himself neither married nor engaged in any kind of sexual activity. Two answers are possible. One can, on the one hand, assert with the Mormons that he did engage in sex, and was, in fact, a polygamist, being married to both Mary and Martha. This view is handicapped, however, by the total absence of any favourable canonical evidence whatsoever. Or, on the other hand, one can point out that Jesus not only upheld the state of marriage (and by implication the inevitable part played in it by sex), but he also contributed to its permanency (Matt. 19:1-9). Of course, he also pointed to the vocation of celibacy (Matt. 19:10-12), but he seems to mean that either is a God-given, God-inspired vocation. His is the vocation of celibacy; others may marry. Either state is a vocation, and neither one denies the basic sexuality of man. In other words, one is redeemed in his sexuality; he is not redeemed from it.

Paul, however, presents a thornier problem to moderns. Certain of his writings, such as Romans 3:23 "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", and Galatians 3:28 "there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus", seem to assert the equal standing of both sexes in the

sight of God (both are guilty of sin, not just the woman by virtue of her spiritual sisterhood to Eve), and their equal receipt of God's grace. Their sexuality thus participates in both their guilt and their redemption. But other passages, such as 1 Corinthians 7:1ff, seem to present a mixed attitude toward the place of sex in the plan of redemption. For purposes of clarification, I have "unscrambled" the various relevant texts from this chapter and placed them in two columns. Column A consists of those verses which seem to take a positive attitude, and Column B those which take a negative.

A

- v.2 But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.
- v.3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.
- v.4 For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does, likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does.
- v.5 Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again.

v.6 I say this by way of concession, not of command.

v.7b But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind, and one of another.

B

v.1b It is well for a man not to touch a woman

v.5b Lest Satan tempt you through lack of self control.

v.7a I wish that all were as I myself am.

v.8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do.

A

v.9 But if they cannot exercise self control they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

v.28a But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a girl marries she does not sin.

B

v.26 I think that in view of the impending disaster it is well for a person to remain as he is.

v.28b Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none--.

v.32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord

v.33 but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And v.34 the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband.

v.35 I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraining upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

A

v.36 If any one thinks that he is not being properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let, him do as he wishes: let them marry-it is no sin.

v.38a So that he who marries his betrothed does well;

v.39b If the husband dies (a widow) is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

B

v.37 But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well.

v.32b and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

v.40 But in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I have the Spirit of God.

These verses have not been divided into columns so that the amount of Paul's verbiage, pro and con, can be compared. Nor has this been done so that the two columns may be read as separate entities and conclusions then drawn from the balance between them. It is obvious that the sense of a sentence or passage can be utterly destroyed when taken out of context. But this has been done so that we may analyse and understand both Paul's positivism and his negativism by scrutinizing them each individually, while trying to keep the general context in mind at the same time. In other words, we have removed these verses from their immediate context, but not from their general context. For when one reads this chapter all at once with all the verses in their proper order and in their correct immediate contexts, one seems to encounter a bewildering array of apparent contradictions and conflicting sentiments. Indeed, this is a most confusing chapter, and it is very difficult to decipher a consistent, systematic position in it.

Paul, however, is not attempting to outline a comprehensive systematic theology of sex. Rather, he has two main concerns in mind: the "impending disaster" or end of the age; and the ethics of Christians who are waiting for this. This chapter is therefore pragmatic in intent, and Paul's

pragmatism is here based not only on his theology of sex, but also upon his eschatological theology. Thus, seeming contradictions arise.

If one scans column B, it will be seen that Paul is preoccupied with two factors: expediency, and the desire of some to get married. His counsel of expediency is based upon two considerations. First, the end of the aeon is around the corner, and second, that prolonged continence can lead a man (or a woman) into sin. Paul therefore tries to strike an expedient balance: if continence leads one into temptation, by all means he should get married (verse 9); but if one is relatively untouched by this temptation, he should remain single (verse 37). He should remain single if possible, not because marriage (and sex) are basically sinful (verse 28), but because with the end so near there is no point in effecting a permanent change in status (even his economic status verse 31), particularly if that change will involve distracting responsibility. In other words, Paul's negativism here is based not on a suspicion of man's sexual nature, but upon the encumbrances of the institution of marriage in the face of the end of the world. Burdensome marriage, not sinful sex is upon his mind.

If, however, one looks at column A, a more positive picture is presented. There is a slightly jarring note in his suggestion that husbands and wives should have their own spouses

only because of the temptation to immorality (verses 2), but underneath it is possible to discern a positive and healthy sex attitude. Mutual dependence and responsibility are evinced in verse 4. It is nothing short of astounding for a single Jew in a patriarchal age to assert that both husbands and wives control each other's bodies, and that the husband belongs to the wife as much as the wife to the husband. This is thoroughly unrabbinical, un-Jewish, unbachelor-like, and unpatriarchal! Similar radical views are put forth in 1 Cor. 11:7-12, and Ephesians 5:21-33. And all this, significantly, is absolutely in keeping with J in Gen. 2:18-25. Similarly, the injunctions for each to give to the other his conjugal right (verse 3) and not to refuse one another (verse 5) reveal anything but an attitude of sex-suppression. And this seems to be true even when the injunctions are viewed in the context of the chapter as a whole. Surely no true ascetic would under any circumstances enjoin sexual intercourse in such a free manner, even if such were considered only as a "remedy for sin."

Further, it is highly significant that Paul seems to assume that even redeemed Christians still have strong sexual urges, and are, in fact "sexed" in every sense of that word. He does not condemn them for having the instincts to get married. His only concern is how best to channel that instinct in the

present circumstances. This indicates that he also assumes that their sexuality is a part of their nature (in keeping with P and J) and therefore a part of their redemption. Indeed, Paul talks of marrying "in the Lord" (verse 39b), which would surely be a contradiction in terms if sexuality were not a part of God's act of redemption.

In short, when Paul says that

"...if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself...that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them..."²⁸,

and when in Ephesians he says that Christ has "broken down the dividing wall of hostility"²⁹ between men, he is in effect saying that in Christ men and women become reconciled to God, and by virtue of this, to one another. Inasmuch as disobedience and alienation from God drove the man and woman apart and debased their sexuality; even so in Christ they are reconciled to one another and their true sexuality obtains once again. Both Jesus and Paul seem to assume this, even if they do not make these sexual implications explicit. Hence, the shame, the fear, the tensions and the tragedy of sexuality in sinful man become redeemed, with the rest of human nature, by God's gracious act in Christ and man's faith in it.

Footnotes

1. Genesis 1:31
2. Ibid, 2:18

Footnotes (cont'd)

3. Ibid
 4. Ibid, 1:28
 5. W.N. Pittenger, The Christian View of Sexual Behavior,
(Greenwich, 1954), p.53
 6. Ibid, p.61
 7. Genesis 3:7
 8. C.A. Simpson, "Exegesis of Genesis", The Interpreter's Bible,
(New York, Nashville, 1952), 1:506
 9. Gerhard Von Rad, Genesis, (Philadelphia, 1961), p.88
 10. Genesis 2:25
 11. W.G. Cole, Sex and Love in the Bible, (New York, 1959), p.380
 12. Chapter 2, pp.66-67
 13. Genesis 9:22
 14. Von Rad, p.89
 15. Genesis 2:23
 16. C.A. Simpson, 1:506
 17. Helmut Thielicke, The Ethics of Sex, (New York, Evanston,
London, 1964), p.8
 18. C.A. Simpson, 1:510
 19. O.A. Piper, The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage, (Digswell
Place, 1960), p.66
 20. Ibid, p.67
 21. C.A. Simpson, 1:510
 22. 2 Samuel 13:19
 23. Ibid, 13:15
 24. Pittenger, p.63
 25. Piper, p.101
 26. Luke 8:2-3
 27. Piper, p.102
 28. 1 Corinthians 5:17-18
 29. Ephesians 2:14
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Chapter Four: The Purpose and Value of Sex: Some Conclusions

On the basis of the preceeding three chapters, we will now attempt to draw some tentative conclusions as to the Biblical understanding of the purpose and value of sex. As we do this, we will bear in mind that the word "sex", so far as our study is concerned, includes not only the act of coitus, but also the sexual structure of man - his sexually oriented nature and his duality. First, then, we shall discuss the Biblical understanding of the purpose of sex.

One assumption that is popularly made, is that the Bible regards the chief purpose of sex as the procreation of the human species. This assumption is bolstered by Roman theology, which goes even further by asserting that unless it is practised with this view specifically in mind, it is sinful. Our first task in this chapter, then, will be to discover, in the light of the preceeding three chapters, whether or not the Bible does clearly designate propagation as the primary purpose of man's sexuality.

In Chapter One, "The Duality of Man" we examined the two accounts of the origin of sexual differentiation. These two accounts were those of P, Genesis 1:26-31; and of J, Genesis 2:7-25. We noted that P made three emphases in his account. These were, first, that sexuality is an integral part of the

the order of creation; second, that it is somehow a part of the image of God which man bears; and third, that inasmuch as it is not a feature of God's own structure, it is unique to the creatures and is therefore a part of the finite nature of man. J's account, on the other hand, contained two main points of interest to our study. He drew out and strongly emphasized the sharp division between the sexes; and, paradoxically, also asserted their complete mutual dependency. Such, then, are the contributions of P and J to our study.

As we recall these points, a most remarkable fact immediately becomes apparent. And that is that neither P nor J especially connects man's sexual differentiation with propagation. In each case the sexes are created without any hint of procreation as the purpose of sex at all. Indeed, the only reference to procreation in P is Genesis 1:28, the divine command to " '---be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" Procreation is thus enjoined, but only after sexual differentiation is a fait accompli. In other words, there is here no evidence that P intended us to believe that it was propagation of the species that God had in mind when he created a dual humanity. The command to multiply came after this dual creation and is not given as the *raison d'etre* of sex. Man is to multiply; but it is not stated nor even necessarily implied

that this multiplication is the purpose of sex.

Similarly, J does not irrevocably line propagation to the purpose of man's sexuality. In fact, in this account the reason for creating a woman - and therefore the dual sexuality of man - is specifically stated. For God says "'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"¹ We have already explored some of the significance of this remarkable statement.² But at this point it is sufficient to note that J did not think of procreation as the end in the creation of woman. According to him, she was created for a special and unique type of relationship with the man.

It is most significant, therefore, that neither of the accounts of the creation of sexual duality specifically indicate that God created sex so that man can reproduce himself. It could, of course, be argued that this was simply assumed by P and J, and the redactors of Genesis; and that it is not therefore explicitly stated. This argument can only be given credence in two ways. First, it can be pointed out that the Hebrews were very much aware of the link between coitus and conception, and therefore assumed that the one was designed to lead to the other; and second, it can be argued that the extremely high value the Hebrews placed upon childbirth indicates their assumption that sex is for procreation chiefly. We shall consider each of these arguments presently. In the

meantime it is interesting to observe that there is no internal evidence in these two accounts of sexual differentiation themselves to indicate that the Biblical writers thought of procreation as the main purpose of the sex act. Even if they did simply assume this, one would think that there would be some small hint of it, however slight, particularly in so important a narrative as that of the creation of man. Genesis 1:26-31 and 2:7-25, therefore, offer little support to those who would say that the Bible posits procreation as the purpose of man's sexuality.

It is certainly true, however, that the Hebrews appreciated the link between copulation and the phenomena of conception, pregnancy, and birth. When one considers that certain primitive tribes have been discovered which do not make this connexion at all, and to whom conception is an absolutely inexplicable mystery, this knowledge of the primitive Hebrews is not as unremarkable as it might at first seem. This link between sex and procreation can be seen in such passages as Genesis 4:1, 14, and 25. Other passages also reflect this, but these will serve for examples for our discussion, and they are as typical as any.

Upon examination, it will be seen that in each case a wife is "known", and a child results. But in none of these

instances is the resulting child considered a justification for the act of sex which preceded it, nor is it in any way indicated that the sex act was engaged in in order to produce the child. It is just simply recognized that sex and procreation go together, and the matter is developed no further.

We have seen, too, that in Hebrew thought children are considered a divine blessing.³ And although they are produced by copulation, they are still a gift from God. God seems to produce children by forming them from the seed of man within the womb. As we also saw, the inevitable corollary to this belief is the conviction that childlessness is a curse.⁴

The importance of children in Hebrew thought, therefore, cannot be denied. And, consequently, the importance of copulation resulting in issue is perhaps implied. All this, however, in no way supports the contention that sex is for procreation alone. It simply indicates the Biblical awareness of the connecting link between the two.

There appear to be only one OT passage which might seem to contradict this, and support the sex-is-for-procreation hypothesis. And that is Genesis 38:1-11, the story of the so-called "Sin of Onan." Since this passage is the main buttress for this hypothesis, it is worth examining in some detail.

The story revolves around the widespread custom of levirate marriage, whereby a brother-in-law was to propagate children by his brother's wife in the event of that brother's

demise. The first male descendent was to bear the name of the deceased father, thus perpetuating his name and inheritance (Deut. 25:5-10). A son of Judah, Onan, when commanded to perform this duty for his dead brother, rebels. When he went in to Tamar, his dead brother's wife, "he spilled the semen on the ground, lest he should give offspring to his brother. And what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and he (the Lord) slew him also."

According to W. G. Cole⁵, Roman theology has traditionally ascribed this spectacular end of Onan to the fact that he achieved sexual orgasm without intent to procreate. The story is not itself clear as to whether or not the semen was spilt because of masturbation or coitus interruptus. This, however, is not the point at issue, since, in Roman theology, neither act can result from a desire to procreate, and thus either is equally sinful. The point ~~of disrupt~~, rather, is this: Why was Onan slain? Was it because he reach orgasm without procreative intent? Or was it that he broke the levirate law?

The Romans have argued that it was because of his defective intent. For one reason, the punishment meted out was much more severe than that enjoined in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy merely prescribed the humiliation of removing the sandal of the accused in the presence of the elders at the gate, the plaintiff spitting upon him, and having his name defiled.⁶ But

Onan was very efficiently executed at the Lord's own hands. This more severe punishment, it is argued, must surely reflect a more serious sin. And the only other possible sin involved is that of defective intent in the sex act. Sex and procreation must, therefore, be linked by natural law - the latter being the purpose and justification of the former.

This argument may be countered by pointing out that the milder penalty prescribed by Deuteronomy may not be a relevant factor here at all. If the Deuteronomic injunction dates from the reformation of King Josiah (621 B.C.), it is considerably later than the legends of Genesis, and may therefore represent a softening of a law that proved unrealistically severe. Further, if the "sin of Onan" were so deadly serious, one would have thought that this incident would have resulted in a law, and the sin involved would have been specifically pointed out. Neither of these things transpires, however. The story is simply told and left, evidently assuming that the moral is perfectly clear. In view of the widespread nature of the levirate marriage, it is surely reasonable to assume that the clear moral involved is Onan's refusal to do his duty, and the result of that refusal. The point of the story therefore has nothing to do with the purpose of coitus. For while it does reveal the Hebrews' awareness of the link between sex and conception and the necessity of coitus for that event to take place, the point still does

not turn upon the divine purpose of sex per se. It turns rather upon the duty of brother to brother.

The Old Testament, then, does not, evidently, regard propagation as the chief purpose of sex. For this purpose is not in any way indicated in either of the two accounts of the origin of man's sexuality, there is no prohibition against the practice of intercourse without the intention to procreate, and the link between coitus and conception is nowhere indicated to be the entire meaning of sexuality. Birth is a blessing, but it does not exhaust the meaning of sex.

The New Testament seems to take a similar position. It is impossible to discover even one passage which definitely links sex with procreation at all. Far from considering propagation the purpose of sex, it does not specifically and explicitly connect the two whatsoever. It might be argued, of course, that it assumes the connexion, and simply follows the lead of the Old Testament in this matter. This may well be so in the case of Jesus. In the case of Paul, however, this may not necessarily be so. As we discovered in Chapter 3, Paul is very much concerned about the imminent end of the world.⁷ So deeply concerned is he, in fact, that he advises against marriage because of its encumbrance in such troublous times. As we also saw, however, he recognized and accepted the sex drives, and recommended marriage if couples found such drives intolerably

strong. Yet, if the end were so very near, it surely would be impossible for many couples to produce offspring before it came. But if they engaged in sex knowing this, and if the only acceptable motive for and purpose of sex were procreation, such couples would be committing a grave sin. Thus if we were to posit procreation as the only valid reason for sexual intercourse, we would be forced into a ridiculous position. We would have either to say that the apostle was advocating sinful unions, or that he knew that the end of the world was more than nine months away from the date of receipt of his letter by the Corinthian Church! Obviously both conclusions are so patently silly that they cannot for a moment be accepted.

It might still be urged that it would still be possible for a couple to practice intercourse with the intent to procreate, and if the end of the world came within nine months, simply accept that fact. If, as Roman theology states, a new human being is formed at the instant of the fusion of the egg and sperm, this argument would seem to gain even more weight. Even if the end of the world came almost immediately, natural law would be satisfied: the sex act would have been performed with the correct intent, and a new person might well have actually been formed.

Like a number of apparently good arguments, however, this one suffers from a complete absence of textual support.

For as we saw in Chapter 3, Paul specifically recommends marriage because of the strength of the sexual instinct. He makes no mention whatever of any intent other than sexual satisfaction. Yet, if the procreative motive were as vitally important as Rome indicates, surely he would have made some slight reference to it - particularly in view of the "impending disaster"!

The plain fact, unpalatable though it must be to the Romans, then, seems to be that Paul was advising marriage without regard for the question of procreation. When he conceded that marriage might sometimes be the most desirable course of action, it was almost certainly the sex drive, and the sex drive alone that he had in mind - not propagation.

There is one New Testament passage that is difficult in this connexion, however. And that is the much disputed 1 Timothy 2:14-15 and its context. This passage reads

"For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived, and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with modesty."

Actually, this passage raises more questions concerning the status of woman and the means of redemption than it does regarding the purpose of sex. Nevertheless, it could be argued that since woman was created after man (Gen. 2:18a), her natural childbearing function must reveal God's purpose in creating her. And since it is necessary for coitus to take place before this

function can be fulfilled, it must be the purpose of coitus to propagate children, thus enabling woman to fulfill her function and thus save herself.

In reply, it might be said that it is questionable if the author of this epistle really intended to say that women will achieve salvation through the sheer act of producing offspring. It is true that he does value this function of womanhood highly (1 Tim. 5:10), but his statement that "woman will be saved through bearing children" is immediately qualified by the addition "if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty." Believing that Paul is the author of this section, Otto Piper writes

"...it is not the act of giving birth to a child by which the woman is saved - Paul is far from promising her a way of self-redemption - but rather the faith by which she accepts her womanhood and all the inconveniences and troubles connected therewith in the light of Christ's redemptive work."⁸

If this epistle is Pauline, then it would certainly seem to contradict Paul's conviction that man is saved through faith alone. If it is not Pauline, then, at best, the author's meaning is certainly debatable.

Even if his meaning were not debatable, however, it would still be a difficult fiat of reasoning to connect this passage with the purpose of sex at all. For according to F. D.

Gealy, the point which the author is really attempting to score "is that woman's salvation depends upon her devotion to the purpose to which she was created, viz, to bear children and of course upon her faithfulness to a chaste Christian Life. ...Our author will assure Christian women that even though woman was responsible for man's first disobedience and must therefore bear the guilt of having brought death into the world and all our woe, nevertheless woman will be saved if she does her duty."⁹

Thus, even though a purpose of sex might logically be deduced from this passage (as we saw above), nevertheless this is not what the author had in mind, and it is extremely doubtful indeed if he even realized the implication. Certainly that implication is nowhere drawn out of expanded, so the author could not have considered it too important even if he were aware of it.

Therefore, when we consider the variety of interpretations possible, and when we also consider that, as F. D. Gealy says, "...irregularities in the language and structure of the Greek text, together with the brevity of the statement, have made for obscurity of meaning and have through the centuries provoked a variety of interpretations, many of them oversubtle or even fantastic---",¹⁰ we must conclude that at the very least, this passage is a weak buttress for the hypothesis that sex is for procreation. Most probably it bears no relevance whatever to the issue.

Because the Old Testament does not specifically state

that procreation is the purpose of sex or even clearly imply it, either in the creation accounts or elsewhere; and because the New Testament does not even expressly link coitus with propagation at all either in the teachings of Jesus or in the remainder of the book, we certainly cannot by any means conclude that the Bible believes procreation to be the purpose of man's sexuality. Certainly in the Old Testament procreation is involved in the meaning of sex - but it by no means exhausts it. In fact it cannot even be said with certainty that it is the most important purpose, for it seems, if anything, to have secondary importance, particularly because it is not even hinted in so important a section of the OT as the creation myths. And since in the NT no purposive link is established between sex and propagation at all, and is even implicitly denied by Paul, we may certainly say with assurance that the NT does not consider procreation a prime purpose. Propagation as a purpose of man's sexuality, then, is relatively unimportant in Biblical thought. Reproduction itself is extraordinarily important - but not as the purpose of or justification for sex.

The question therefore arises "What is the Biblical understanding of the purpose of sexuality?" I am not sure if this question can be answered with any neat formula at all. For as we have already observed, the Biblical writers probably had no tidy definition in mind, and simply had certain assumptions

and ideas concerning it which they nowhere systematized or even conceptualized. Indeed, one senses that they felt a tremendous sense of awe and mystery whenever they touched upon the subject. Paul, for instance, when speaking of the one-flesh relationship in marriage, expressly states that "this is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the Church."¹¹ Paul was in the presence of a mystery when he thought of marriage, and since he connected marriage and sex so closely, it requires no great stretch of the imagination to speculate that he might well have been thinking of man's entire sexuality as well. Indeed, the Hebrew aversion to nakedness¹², the utilization of euphemisms for the anatomy of sex¹³, and the very inclusion of sexual differentiation in the mystery of creation itself¹⁴, all betray a fundamental awe and reverence for a man's sexuality. In fact, the purpose of sex is treated in a manner similar to that of the form and shape of God: it is hinted at, it is reflected in various laws, prohibitions, commandments and stories; but it is nowhere reduced to a single, conceptual, comprehensive statement. The nearest that we are able to come to a precise definition of the Biblical understanding of the purpose of sex, then, is this: the purpose of sex is a sheer mystery. It is a vast mystery deeply rooted in the mysteries of God himself and of his creation.

Does this mean, then, that it is totally and utterly incomprehensible? By no means. In the Biblical literature we have studied, and in other canonical literature as well, we receive glimpses of its purpose. Like the glimpses we receive of Jesus, his ministry and his teachings in the gospels, these glimpses of the purpose of sex are difficult to systematize. They are, in fact, so difficult to systematize that such a task, if it can be successfully executed at all, must be done by a theologian. What we can do, however, is briefly summarize the glimpses we have noted in these chapters, indicate some of the leads to an understanding of the purpose of sex which they furnish, and note some significant connecting links between them which might aid us to perceive a certain cohesive pattern of thought within them. These glimpses of clues to the mystery of the purpose of sex, then, are as follows.

1. Human sexuality is a part of God's plan of creation, and was so from the very beginning.¹⁵ It therefore shares in God's purpose for all creation, and is a central and integral feature of it. This concept is so deeply rooted in P's thinking that he represents God as creating man male and female right at the very moment of creation. Whatever the purpose of sex, then, it cannot be separated from the purpose of the created order in general, or the creation of humanity in particular. It is not a mere implement to achieve a specific temporal end -

such as the continuation of the species. For it partakes, rather, of the grand plan and purpose of the whole universe itself.

2. The purpose of sex is somehow interrelated with man's bearing of the image of God.¹⁶ Although this fascinating and important concept is nowhere elaborated, either in P or elsewhere in the Bible, certain other glimpses may shed some light upon the meaning of this one. Certainly, however, this does indicate that the purpose of sex is not exhausted by any specific physical function associated with it. That is to say, the meaning of sex has not been fully realized when a couple merely achieve satisfactory orgasm or produce a child, or establish a mutually satisfying pattern of sexual indulgence. For while functions such as orgasm and reproduction are inevitably bound up in the meaning of sex, its full purpose is somehow grounded in the very humanity of a man or a woman.

Perhaps the pattern of thought consciously or unconsciously adopted by the writer of the creation myths runs somewhat as follows. If sexuality is connected to the image of God which we bear, and if God is not himself a sexual being, then the meaning of man's sexuality must extend beyond his physical sexual construction in order to partake of the image. For if human sexuality consisted solely of a physical construction, then it could not possibly have anything to do with the image of

God as this image is not a physical resemblance.¹⁷ But since this image of God somehow defines man's uniqueness, and since sex is connected with it, it follows that sexuality, like the image of God, must penetrate far beyond man's physical construction. In other words, in Biblical thought, to say that man is a sexual being, is not merely to say that he is possessed of male or female organs and is capable of orgasm and the production of offspring. But rather, it is to say that he is possessed of a "maleness" or "femaleness" which permeates deeply into the far inner reaches of his personality. And it is within these inner reaches of his personality that one finds the connecting link between man's sexuality and the image of God, and therefore it is there that one finds a major portion of the purpose of sexuality as well. The purpose of sex therefore cannot be determined simply by observing the physical phenomena and results of the sex act, and then connecting them with natural law and the works of Providence. And any theology which attempts to do this is fundamentally un-Biblical. The purpose of sex cannot be inferred from its biology.

3. Not only is sexuality related to the image of God, but it is also paradoxically related to man's creatureliness and finitude.¹⁸ For it is confined to the created order, God himself being transcendent to it and not himself a "sexed" being. Although it is not explicitly stated, the Biblical writers perhaps assumed that man is sexed like the animals, and differs

from them in this respect only in that his sexuality is related to the divine image. Sexuality thus participates in two orders as it were. For it relates to the divine order by virtue of its connexion with the image of God, and it relates to the created and finite order by virtue of its connexion with man's creatureliness.

Sexuality, therefore, cannot be divorced from its physical manifestations, actions and results. We have just concluded that its purpose cannot be defined in terms of its biology. But now we must add that it cannot be defined without it either. That is to say, while sexuality means more than a differentiation of sexual organs, and is, in fact, a part of man's inner personality; it also includes these physical organs and there is no sexuality apart from them. The purpose of sex is not entirely or even chiefly biological. But the biology of sex is definitely a part of its purpose. For sex is very much a part of the biological, animal-like, and creaturely construction of man.

This view is reflected throughout the OT. For while mystery surrounds sex, and while, as we have just discovered, it is held in a very lofty regard indeed, and is actually connected with the supreme purpose and image of God, there is still no pseudo "spiritualizing" of it. It seems rather to be wholesomely accepted as an unalterable feature of the physical life,

and, in such works as Song of Songs, is actually celebrated in very earthy, concrete, sensual and vivid terms.

Indeed, if P's creation myth is laid side by side with Song of Songs, one perceives an amazingly profound paradox. For on the one hand, sex is seen with great reverence as a part of the plan of creation, and as a more than physical phenomenon - a phenomenon that reaches far into the depth of human existence and which partakes of the divine image itself. But on the other hand it is also seen in all its earthy beauty and physical charm. It is accepted positively and wholeheartedly as something unashamedly physical.

This paradox between Song of Songs and P cannot be explained away entirely on the basis of their different periods or origin. That is, it cannot accurately be said that one represents Biblical thought in one period, and the other Biblical thought of another period. For while P is probably much older than Song of Songs (which probably dates from the third century in its present form), nevertheless the latter is composed of much older material, some of which may well have been known by P, and which, because it was possibly folk poetry and wedding songs, reflects the attitude of the Hebrew people equally as well. This is a paradox in Biblical thought itself.

The Bible, then, cannot be accused of etherealizing sex out of the physical realm altogether, nor can it be accused

of a crude and unaesthetic earthiness. For it seems to accept sexuality as it does all of life; as a wholeness, pertaining both to men's bodies and to their souls. Sexuality stretches across all modes of experience - mental, spiritual, and physical.

This means, then, that coitus and the production of offspring are essential ingredients in the full purpose of sex. For while this purpose cannot be realized in them alone, it cannot be realized without them. For sexuality is a part of man's creatureliness.

4,5. Our fourth and fifth glimpses into the purpose of sex will be treated together, as they supplement one another very closely, and they both derive from J's creation myth.¹⁹

In the first place, J asserted that there is a sharp demarcation line between the two sexes.²⁰ For man was not created bisexually at the outset, and became truly sexually differentiated only when the woman was later created. Thus there is a fundamental difference in function, structure, and personality between the sexes; a difference that should not be blurred by homosexuality, transvestianism, or mutilation. J emphasizes sexual differentiation.

But at the same time, he emphasizes the mutual dependency of man and woman. For man is not complete by himself; and so woman is formed. Neither is whole without the other.

The purpose of sex, then, is partly that mankind might be whole. For first he is fragmented by a sexual division, and then he is enabled to complete himself once again. Sex is thus a bond uniting a man and a woman in a relationship in which their humanity is completed.

The question now arises, "What type of relationship, then, is formed? What is meant here by 'completion' and 'oneness'?"

6. The Bible nowhere explains this precisely. But perhaps we receive an indication in its use of $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$. We discovered in Chapter 2 that "to know" is used extensively of sexual intercourse in the Bible, and that the many connotations and nuances of meaning which this term carries might well indicate something of the purpose of sex.²¹ If the purpose of sex is in part at least to form a special whole relationship between the divided halves of humanity, then "to know" may well give us a few hints as to what sort of a relationship is thus formed.

We discovered that when $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ is used of sex, it embodies connotations drawn from its other uses of interpersonal relationships, and of the divine-human encounter. Therefore, "to know" a person in a sexual relationship is to form a relationship containing such features as ordinary personal acquaintance and recognition; selection, or a seeking out of a loved one for such a very special relationship; free response to this searching out; a self-disclosure of a very deep and intimate

sort; a total commitment or self-giving to the beloved; a tender and protective love and care; patience; mercy; and grace - free and undeserving love.

Of course, it is more than unlikely that the Biblical writers selected "to know" for the act of coitus specifically because it implied all this. Yet, if language reflects underlying thoughts and attitudes to any extent whatever, it is most significant that it is this particular word that is used. Therefore, when it is asked "What type of relationship does the Bible have in mind when it thinks of the sex act as completing humanity?", we might very plausibly suggest a relationship embodying all the above qualities, at least to some extent. In contemporary thought this relationship might well be termed an "I-Thou" relationship, involving self-giving, self-disclosure, and self-sacrifice as it does.

7. A seventh glimpse into the Biblical understanding of the purpose of sex is the term "one flesh". We have already observed that this term probably does not apply specifically to the act of sex.²³ Nevertheless, the very fact that sex and marriage are so closely associated, and that the Bible seems to assume that the former is an integral natural part of the latter, might well hint that an interpersonal relationship involving the total person is at least a part of the purpose of man's sexuality. It is true that the Biblical use of "one flesh" does not itself lead

us to this conclusion inescapably. But in the light of all the above glimpses into the purpose of sex which the Bible supplies this is not an unreasonable conclusion. In itself, the term "one flesh" supplies little data for our understanding of the purpose of sex. But in conjunction with such a specifically sexual term as "to know", and the creation narratives with their unique emphases, we may well be justified in say that "one flesh" hints that one purpose of sex is to establish an "I-Thou" relationship.

8. An eighth glimpse into the purpose of sexuality is provided by the euphemisms employed in the Hebrew language for the sex organs and secretions.²⁴

The question immediately arises: "Why are these euphemisms used?" Is it because of an underlying negative attitude toward sex? Is it an instinctive response to a basic prudishness?

No easy answers come readily to hand. But once again in the light of our other discoveries concerning the Biblical understanding of the purpose of sex, neither of these answers seems feasible. When one recalls the utter candor of such passages as Song of Songs, the Levite's Concubine, the Sodomite Homosexuals, etc., the charge that the Bible is prudish becomes sheer nonsense. The positive attitude toward sex seen in the creation myths and in Paul refutes the similar charge that the Bible is negative in such matters. Neither prudishness nor

negativism gives rise to Biblical euphemistic language.

Perhaps one explanation as good as any is that the euphemisms are a response to an instinctive awareness of the mystery of sex. We have remarked that the Hebrew fear of nakedness may represent a deep reverence for sexuality.²⁵

Similarly, it is possible that the employment of euphemisms for the sex organs and secretions reflects the same attitude. Everything concerning man's sexuality is a mystery - including its purpose. And the euphemisms may ^{be} reflect this.

9. The ninth and final glimpse into the purpose of sex which we have studied is the connexion between sex and sin on the one hand, and between sex and redemption on the other.²⁶ With reference to Genesis 3, we remarked that the purpose of sex is corrupted by sin, and restored by redemption, as is the purpose of all creation. Sex is not the cause of sin, but it is inextricably intertwined with it and corrupted by it.

Since, therefore, according to Genesis 3 the purpose of sexuality is frustrated by sin, one would expect to see the consequences of this defeated purpose reflected in the ensuing story subsequent to the act of sin itself. And as we saw²⁷, this expectation is not disappointed. After eating of the fruit, the remainder of Genesis 3 is devoted to the consequences of man's sin, both to his life in general, and to his sexuality in par-

ticular.

Because this description of the defeated purpose of sex is furnished, then, one would expect to find in it a hint of what the original purpose is. That is, an account of the defeated purpose of sexuality should give us some leads as to its designed purpose. For example, if the main purpose of sex were procreation (as we have just seen that it is not), then, logically, an account of the perversion of the purpose of sex should concern itself with describing the perversion of this procreative design. From the account of this perversion, then, we should be able to infer back to the original purpose - at least to some extent.

Thus the question now arises, "What were the consequences of sin to man's sexuality? What sort of an account of the perversion of the purpose of sex is offered us in Genesis 3?" In Chapter 3 of this thesis, we examined this account and observed that all the consequences of sin to man's sexuality were consequences of relationship.²⁸ That is to say, the biology of sex was in no way affected by sin. Rather it was the personal relationship between the man and the woman which was destroyed. Inferring back from this, then, we may suggest that the main purpose of sex in J's thinking is an "I-Thou" relationship. And when Genesis 3 is added to J's other work we have examined - the second creation account - and the purpose of sex which he indicates there and which we have already noted, this conclusion would seem almost

certain.

When we consider, then, that in Genesis 2 J is concerned to underline both sexual differentiation and mutual dependency between the sexes, and what in Genesis 3 he describes the sinful corruption of sex purely in terms of a broken human relationship, we may assert with some degree of confidence that he conceived of the purpose of sex as the power of human relatedness, or the basis of an "I-Thou" relationship, or the means of human completion.

We also noted in Chapter 3 of this thesis that in the New Testament the redemption of sex is also described in terms of relationship, in this case the broken relationship being restored.²⁹ If the purpose of sex were exhausted by the act of coitus or procreation, we would expect to find its restoration described with reference to them. Rather, as we saw, the New Testament scarcely makes reference to the act of procreation at all, and although Paul enjoins marriage because of the strength of the sex instinct, he does not indicate that this is the sole purpose of man's sexuality. Redemption is a basic change of relationship. Men are reconciled to God, and to one another. Sex is a part of this reconciliation, and men and women are not reconciled to one another in that they can now practise coitus more satisfactorily or produce more and better children. But they are reconciled to one another in that their true "I-Thou"

relationship - their true sexuality - is restored according to God's purpose.³⁰

Although the precise purpose of man's sexuality is a mystery, then, and although it may never be formulated exhaustively, the Biblical evidence which we have examined gives us some clues to the mystery. And although sex is assuredly a part of man's creatureliness, and therefore is definitely a biological phenomenon which cannot be "spiritualized", nevertheless this biological phenomenon is the basis for a deep interpersonal relationship, of which the production of offspring is certainly a part, but not the most important part. The purpose of sex is a part of the purpose of all creation. And if the assertion of the author of Ephesians that God's purpose is "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth"³¹ is an adequate summary of God's ultimate plans, then the idea of sex as the power of relatedness would seem to gather even more strength. This idea is further supported by the connexion of sex with the image of God; J's emphasis upon the sexual split and mutual dependency for human completion; the Biblical use of "to know" for the sex act; the use of "one flesh" for marriage; the Hebrew reverence for sex found in the euphemisms; and the connexion of sex with sin and redemption. All this with all the various implications attached, seems to indicate that at least one major purpose of man's sexuality is to unite the two halves of a divided

humanity in a deep, unique, and mysterious oneness.

We turn now to the final consideration of this thesis. And that is the value of man's sexuality. The question is often asked "Does the Bible have a negative attitude toward sex? Does it suppress it, even considering it evil and dangerous?" In short, is sex good or bad?

In the light of our above remarks, this is now almost a superfluous question, and any attempt to answer it is virtually an anti-climax. For the very purpose which we have suggested almost precludes any negative answer. If we have been in any way accurate in our assessment of the Biblical understanding of its purpose, our answer can only be that the Bible considers sex good.

For in the first place, it is a part of God's good creation, which God not only pronounced "good", but "very good." It is connected with the image of God which man bears - to call that image anything but good would be tantamount to blasphemy! It is part of man's biology, and like all other created biological things, shares in the essential goodness of creation. It divides humanity sharply in two, but is the basis of human unification, and it is actually necessary to complete mankind and thus fulfill him. The very word for sexual intercourse - "to know" - connotes God's divine encounter with man. It is a part of a "one flesh" relationship in marriage. It is so revered

that euphemisms are employed for its biology. And although it is connected with sin, it is not a causation factor - at least initially. It can be perverted and actually used for evil. But in this respect it is no different from the rest of creation. And in any event, it is redeemed in Christ, as is mankind as a whole. Above all, it is the means of the human inter-sexual "I-Thou" relationship .

The usual passages quoted in support of Biblical negativism, Genesis 3³², and Paul in 1 Corinthians 7³³, we have seen actually to be in accord with the prevailing Biblical concept of the goodness of sex. And such works as Song of Songs cannot be described as negative!

In view of everything that we have discovered throughout this entire thesis without any exception, then, we can only assert that in the Biblical understanding, man's sexuality is definitely and emphatically good.

Footnotes

1. Genesis 2:18
2. Chapter 1, pp.25-26
3. Chapter 3, pp.79-80
4. Ibid, p.80
5. W.G.Cole, Sex and Love in the Bible, (New York, 1959), p.300
6. Deuteronomy 25:9-10
7. Chapter 3, pp.97-98
8. Otto A. Piper, The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage, (Digswell Place, 1960), p.102
9. F.D. Gealy, "Exegesis of 1 Timothy", The Interpreter's Bible, (Abingdon, 1955), 11:407

Footnotes (cont'd)

10. Ibid
 11. Ephesians 5:32
 12. Chapter 3, pp.73-77
 13. Chapter 2, pp.65-67
 14. Chapter 1
 15. Ibid, pp.8-10
 16. Ibid, pp.10-12
 17. Ibid, pp.11-12
 18. Ibid, pp.12-14
 19. Ibid, pp.15-26
 20. Ibid, pp.15-24
 21. Chapter 2, pp.28-54
 22. Ibid, pp.53-54
 23. Ibid, pp.54-65
 24. Ibid, pp.65-66
 25. Chapter 3, pp.73-77
 26. Ibid
 27. Chapter 3, pp. 73-89
 28. Ibid
 29. Ibid, pp. 89-100
 30. Ibid, p.100
 31. Ephesians 1:10b
 32. Chapter 3, pp.69-89
 33. Ibid, pp.92-100
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